

JUDAISM

The Origins of Modern Jewish Studies and the Founding of the Hebrew University

*William M. Brinner, George L. Mosse,
David N. Myers, Martin Jay, Jacob M. Landau,
Menahem Milson, Anita Shapira, Arthur A. Goren*

The Recovered Self: Auschwitz & Autobiography

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Teaching Judaism in the Secular University

William Nicholls

Pat Buchanan and the Jews

Edward Shapiro

Divorce, Tel Aviv Style - 1973

Victor Geller

Poetry

Leora B. Smith and Hilda Raz

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The Origins of Modern Jewish Studies and the Founding of the Hebrew University:

<i>Introduction</i>	WILLIAM M. BRINNER	131
<i>Central European Intellectuals in Palestine</i>	GEORGE L. MOSSE	134
<i>A New Scholarly Colony in Jerusalem: The Early History of Jewish Studies</i>	DAVID N. MYERS	142
<i>Response to George Mosse and David Myers</i>	MARTIN JAY	159
<i>Culture, Religion, and Language in Middle Eastern Universities</i>	JACOB M. LANDAU	163
<i>The Beginnings of Arabic and Islamic Studies</i>	MENAHEM MILSON	169
<i>The Zionist Labor Movement and the Hebrew University</i>	ANITA SHAPIRA	183
<i>The View from Scopus: Judah L. Magnes and the Early Years</i>	ARTHUR A. GOREN	203
<i>Pat Buchanan and the Jews</i>	EDWARD SHAPIRO	226
REVIEWS		
<i>The Recovered Self: Auschwitz and Autobiography</i>	D. MESHER	237
<i>Teaching Judaism in the Secular University</i>	WILLIAM NICHOLLS	246
FROM ALL THEIR HABITATIONS		
<i>Divorce, Tel Aviv Style - 1973</i>	VICTOR GELLER	249
POETRY		
<i>Water, Unfolding</i>	LEORA B. SMITH	225
<i>Vowels</i>	HILDA RAZ	235

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We mourn the passing of Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld (1913-1996), president of the American Jewish Congress from 1966 to 1972, and a long-time contributing editor of JUDAISM.

The Origins of Modern Jewish Studies and the Founding of the Hebrew University

Introduction

WILLIAM M. BRINNER

THROUGHOUT MUCH OF ITS HISTORY THE UNIVERSITY HAS reflected its medieval Christian origins: medieval in some of its customs and practices, even in its official dress; and Christian in many of its traditions, values, and teachings. It was certainly a western European creation that spread throughout Europe—and from there into the New World and even further, largely by way of imperialist expansion. A telling sign of its universal acceptance and successful penetration of other, very different cultures, is the rather recent claim of the venerable Islamic religious school, Al-Azhar in Cairo, to be the oldest university in the world. This is based on its having been founded in the tenth century—but as a center for the propagation of Shi'ite Islam and later, Sunni Islam—its formal organization along more-or-less modern university lines having taken place only during the 1930s.

Given the long history of the exclusion of Jews both as students and instructors from European and even American universities, one might think that modern Jews would have had a problem with the idea of borrowing this institution in their return to their land and the creation of a national home there. After all, up to and during the first decades of this century most European universities would appoint Jews as professors only on condition of their conversion to Christianity. Until as recently as forty years ago even in the officially secular and avowedly non-sectarian United States, many university departments would not appoint openly-Jewish professors. This is not to speak of the *numerus clausus* and the quotas imposed on aspiring Jewish students in many European countries and, perhaps more subtly, even in some of the most prestigious American universities.

Nevertheless, when we examine the history of the idea of a Jewish university, we learn that as early as 1466 there was an unsuccessful attempt in Sicily to obtain royal approval for the establishment of such an institution. Other failed efforts are recorded, but it is only with the rise of modern Jewish nationalism, even before the Zionist version, that we have serious discussions of such a possibility. In two

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Hebrew-language articles published in 1882, Hermann Shapira, a member of the *Hovevei Zion* (Lovers of Zion) movement, who taught mathematics at Heidelberg University, proposed the creation of a Jewish university with two faculties: theology and natural sciences. A more fruitful move followed the first World Zionist Congress when, some twenty years later, in 1902, a pamphlet was published proposing the establishment of a *Jüdische Hochschule*. The aim of this proposed institution, in keeping with the views of the *Haskalah* (Enlightenment) movement, was the exposure of Jews to what were seen as the minimal requirements for integration into the modern world: modern languages and science. Disillusioned with the ideal of integration by the events of that period, the focus was shifted to national rebirth, still with the aim of “modernizing” the Jews.

In spite of, or perhaps because of this history, early Zionist thinkers and later, at least part of the modern Yishuv, decided that the creation of a modern Jewish university in Palestine was an important priority. At one and the same time it would both validate Jewish credentials as a modern nation-to-be, and offer an intellectual home to those Jewish students and professors alike, who were excluded from university life—though there were those in the Yishuv who questioned the necessity or even advisability of creating such an elitist institution in this fledgling society, then numbering about one hundred thousand Jews. Nevertheless, plans moved ahead for a university with a cornerstone laid as early as 1918, and finally, in 1925 amid pomp and rejoicing, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was officially dedicated. Since its founding the Hebrew University has flourished and developed into a leading intellectual and educational center, not only in Israel, where its former branches in other cities, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Beersheva, have developed into independent institutions, but on the international level as well, where it has attained worldwide recognition and distinction.

In celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the official opening of the Hebrew University, and of its role in the spread of Judaic scholarship throughout the Jewish world, a conference was held at the University of California in Berkeley on October 29-30, 1995, where the papers published here were read and discussed. The reasons for this particular venue are several: one is the close connection of one of the primary sponsors, the Center for Studies in Higher Education in Berkeley with a group of Israeli scholars preparing a history of the Hebrew University; another is the role of this area in the life of the first Chancellor and President of the Hebrew University, Judah L. Magnes. Born in San Francisco, Magnes lived in Oakland until he went east to study at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Also, through his sister's marriage with William Popper, professor of Semitic languages at Berkeley from 1904-1944, Magnes and his children maintained a connection with the city of Berkeley and the University of California. A major sponsor of the conference, therefore, was the Judah L. Magnes Museum, The Jewish Museum of the West, which is situated in Berkeley. Talks were also presented at Temple Emanuel in San Francisco, where Magnes had studied Talmud with its founding Rabbi, Dr. Jacob Voorsanger. Several San Francisco-based family foundations, as well as university centers at Berkeley and Stanford University, also provided financial support for the conference.

The six papers delivered in three sessions reflect three central geographic and cultural points of reference: one, tracing the Central European origin, and primarily German education and training of the first faculty members and their

influence on the institution; another, following the conflicts between the differing viewpoints of some Zionist leaders in the Diaspora and the leadership of the University in Palestine, leading to changes in the organization and leadership of the institution; and still another, looking at the surrounding Arab and Islamic environment and how the University reacted to it and attempted to interact with that world.

George Mosse offers a special insight into the intellectual background of the very unique group of men—among them Martin Buber, Hugo Bergman, Gershom Scholem, Hans Kohn, and Arthur Ruppin—who formed a “colony” of sorts in Jerusalem, and whose German-inspired vision influenced the University’s approach towards the Humanities and Social Sciences, indeed, towards secondary education as well, in Jewish Palestine for many years. David Myers presents the “liberal colonialist” approach of the founders and first professors in a challenging comparison with the founders of the American University of Beirut. Martin Jay’s response to these two papers raises the question of the costs of such University education for modern Jewish and Israeli culture.

In his essay, Jacob Landau traces the development of universities in Turkey and the Arab lands and compares their cultural and political programs with those of Israel’s universities. Menahem Milson sketches the history of the School of Oriental Studies, founded in 1926 largely on the initiative of Magnes, and its successive generations of faculty from Central Europeans to native-born Israelis, most of the latter students of the first generation or their successors.

Anita Shapira examines a different set of figures and their attitudes towards the new institution—namely, two leaders of the Zionist Labor movement; Berl Katznelson and David Ben Gurion. She points up the conflict between the bourgeois, largely Central European university environment and the socialist, Eastern European labor figures, as well as the important difference in the place of the university between, for example, the Czech national movement, where it played a “central role in the revival or creation of a national culture,” and the Jewish case, where the cultural revolution took place outside of the university.

In the final essay, Arthur Goren discusses the bitter ideological and political conflict between Magnes and Chaim Weizmann, the acknowledged leader of the Zionist movement, who had the strong support of Albert Einstein in this struggle. His essay assesses the role Magnes played as first Chancellor (1925-35) and President (1935-48) of the University.

A common thread in all these papers is the German background, its emphasis on *Bildung*, on liberalism, and the special nationalism, based on values and beliefs rather than on territorial claims, which shaped the university. These papers also remind us of the central role of Magnes. Without his determined stand and important contacts, the university would not have become *the* Hebrew University, with its emphasis on the language and culture of the Jewish past, with the Institute of Jewish Studies (1924) as one of its first components. Nor, perhaps more significantly, would Arabic and Islamic culture culminating in a School of Oriental Studies (1926), now The Institute of Asian and African Studies, have been established so soon. The vision of these pre-Hitler “Germans” may have failed to bear fruit politically, leaving many of them quite disillusioned, but their cultural vision lives on.

Magnes, California-born, had helped to bridge the communities of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and the more established German Jews in New York

when he served as Rabbi of Temple Emanuel at the beginning of the century. On the fringes of the founding faculty of the Hebrew University and its Institute of Jewish Studies intellectually, he was deeply involved politically, both by virtue of his brief period of study in Germany and by the similarity of his political vision to theirs. Although he was not one of them, the role that Magnes played was essential in carrying out central aspects of that vision.

Central European Intellectuals in Palestine

GEORGE L. MOSSE

TO DISCUSS THE FATE OF CENTRAL EUROPEANS IN Palestine, their demographics and their problems of acculturation as well as their scholarly contributions, would in itself be an interesting task, but this essay has a much more specific focus: a singular group of Central European intellectuals who shared a certain Zionist vision, and whose enthusiasm and commitment had carried them to Palestine already in the 1920s. While there are not one but many Zionist narratives, this particular Zionism played a leading role in the creation of the Hebrew University—though its long-range influence is more difficult to capture. As Martin Buber put it, looking backwards, this group of men worked not within but side by side with official Zionism. However, their overall Zionist vision may still represent a Zionist alternative worth remembering.

This group of Central Europeans contained an impressive list of intellectuals whose public influence was greater than their small numbers, even if they did not in the end succeed in realizing their own vision of a Jewish homeland. They included among other intellectuals men like the philosopher Hugo Bergman, the historian Hans Kohn, Gershom Scholem, Arthur Ruppin—the key figure in Zionist settlement—and the journalist Robert Weltsch; Martin Buber was a member of this group, and from the outside Judah Magnes, the president of the new Hebrew University, participated frequently in their discussions. Many

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more names could be added, professors at the new Hebrew University, or writers. They were defined not by their specific place of origin, whether Berlin, Prague, Vienna, or Lemberg, but by the common intellectual background and shared nationalist vision which they brought to the Zionist enterprise.

Though the core of this group remained surprisingly stable, its outer limits are more difficult to reconstruct. Obviously not all Central European intellectuals joined. Moreover, the affinity between their ideas and those of Ahad Ha'am and A. D. Gordon blurred some of the specifically Central European ideals they advocated. Nevertheless, a common core of attitudes and perceptions document the cohesive Zionist vision of this group. There was also a self-image and social reality which further defined this group both in their own minds and in that of the Yishuv in general. These men, though they were committed Zionists, came to symbolize the "Yekkes" of the later Israeli imagination, their numbers reinforced by the Central European refugees who arrived after the Nazis came to power.

Not unlike the Central European immigrants in many other countries they kept their lifestyle almost intact—but then to what group of the population could they have assimilated in the Palestine of those years? I myself still remember even through the 1970s the social gatherings in Jerusalem with their earnestness and absence of small talk, the birthday celebrations with their poetry recitations, which resembled those of my own youth in Berlin over half a century earlier. And Agnon who knew these scholars, observed in his novel, *Shira*, which caricatured the life of some central European professors at the Hebrew University, how "they poetized every family event." They clung to the German classics as part of what it meant to be educated, and when a well respected German scholar came to Jerusalem in the 1980s to read (in German) from the then newly discovered and highly erotic love poems of Goethe, their indignation knew no bounds. His lecture was generally regarded as "Nestbeschmutzung," a fouling of one's own nest. Their life style was accompanied by a lasting commitment to the Central European ideals in which they had been raised and which, as we shall see, continues to inform important aspects of their Zionism. The Philosopher Hugo Bergman, who emigrated from Prague in 1920 and whose published diaries are a preeminent source for the history of these intellectuals—and who was to become an important force in the early history of the Hebrew University—wrote soon after he had arrived in Palestine how they lived on a lonely island, believing themselves encircled by enemies, for no one understood their kind.

Living for the most part in Jerusalem, these men constituted a close-knit circle, something like a perpetual and mobile discussion group, as they visited each other's houses and came together at the University as well. Like all intellectuals they often disagreed among themselves, and yet several influences due to their Central European background and education continued to play a defining role both in their Judaism and in their Zionist commitment as well. I want to single out neo-romanticism, liberalism, and, above all, the concept of *Bildung* as documenting an intellectual and cultural continuity. Germany

provided the model: when Central European Jews at the time of their emancipation reached out to European culture, as Robert Weltsch put it, it was German culture they had in mind. For these Jews at emancipation the encounter with Europe took place on German soil. Such intellectuals had passed through a Germanic educational system, and most of them had spent time at what was then its pinnacle, the University of Berlin.

That text which best expressed their Jewish awakening, and which had touched many of them in their youth, came out of a specifically Jewish, but equally out of a neo-romantic tradition. Martin Buber's *Three Speeches on Judaism* (1911), originally given at the request of the Bar Kochba group in Prague, rejected the normative nationalism of the twentieth century, and instead returned to an earlier, neo-romantic tradition of national consciousness, turning to what he called the inner history of the Jewish people. That inner history, he believed, must be recaptured by every individual Jew, serve to change him, and give him a feeling of unity and spiritual direction. This nationalism meant a certain moral and ethical posture rather than a territorial demand. The linkage between national awakening and individual reform was typical for the rising national consciousness of all European nations, except that in these speeches reference to the environment in which this national consciousness might unfold was not stressed. Palestine, to be sure, was important, an ideal, but not essential for the Jewish awakening; while, in contrast, the "native landscape" had played a major part in German nationalism. Yet the unity of the nation and the individual, based upon shared emotions and a shared history, remained intact. This relative downgrading of Palestine as a geographic entity was suited to the diaspora but was not typical for this group, though it did, perhaps, foreshadow their emphasis upon Palestine as a necessary center for Jewish renewal without being wedded to precise geographical boundaries. They did not follow the implications of the "native landscape" in German and other European nationalisms which often served as a springboard for aggression, emphasizing the geographic claims of national sovereignty.

The Jewish national awakening of these men was in fact similar to the awakening German national consciousness a century earlier, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and determined their admiration for some of the fathers of that movement with their frequent references to Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Fichte, so it was said, had tried to pull Germans from out of their deepest degradation through a national awakening, similar to their own task. Martin Buber himself saw Fichte as setting an example, giving to nationalism the ethical task which religion had performed previously. Fichte's nationalism, according to Weltsch, Bergman, and others was built on the reform of the individual, and not upon a belief system which was imposed from the top down. It was in this spirit that the principal Zionist organ, *Die Welt*, in 1912, took notice of Fichte's 120th birthday. This was, of course, Fichte as read before National Socialism, the early rather than the later Fichte. Yet it is astounding how in their search for models such men ignored the theme of German superiority present in his *Speeches*

to the German Nation (1808). By the time Buber's *Three Speeches* were published much of European nationalism had already become a civic religion.

In concert with the ideal of *Bildung*, nationalism for all of this group remained an open-ended process, and unlike German nationalism was never conceived as a finished or unalterable product. On the contrary, the distinction between Jewish and normative nationalism was sharply drawn, and the aggressive aspect of neo-romanticism was further neutralized by their liberalism and their devotion to *Bildung* and scholarship. As Martin Buber wrote, we do not want a homeland of this or that size but are concerned how its community will be constituted, and Gershom Scholem, however contemptuous of the vagueness of Buber's thought, agreed, asserting that national sovereignty did not matter if only Hebrew were spoken in Jerusalem.

These Central European intellectuals founded *Brit Shalom* in 1925 with Arthur Ruppin as its first chairman, and Scholem, Bergman, and Hans Kohn as prominent members. This was a small circle of friends, putting their Zionist ideals into practice, calling for Arab-Jewish understanding and a bi-national Jewish-Arab Palestine. Their influence was much greater than their small numbers. This is not the place to discuss this group, but the principles for which it stood had an undoubted influence on the political tone of the new Hebrew University.

The *Three Speeches* were only one part of the heritage of these intellectuals, liberalism was another, and the third which synthesized all the others, was the German concept of *Bildung* which they had absorbed through their education and which they tried to pass on to their university. Their liberalism meant putting the individual in the center of Jewish nationalism; according to Hugo Bergman man must never become a mere object. There are, of course, several liberalisms, but their own was close to a classical liberalism which took most of its inspiration from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. They were convinced that there was no real contradiction between their principles of nationalism and the Enlightenment itself.

The Enlightenment as they tended to define it was once again close to that definition which men like Fichte had also advocated as they started to define the new national consciousness. Enlightenment meant that cosmopolitanism as well as opposition to intolerance and orthodoxy could exist side by side with a national identity, but it did not mean the unquestioned supremacy of reason. Theirs was a different liberalism from that of Theodor Herzl's *Judenstaat* which had taken the form of an ideal liberal state for the Jews. The Zionism of these Central European intellectuals was based upon what they understood as Jewish values, Jewish traditions, and the primacy of the Hebrew language. It seems to me questionable whether Herzl by contrast would have placed an institute of Judaic Studies at the core of the Humanities at the new Hebrew University. Though they differed in their specific understanding of Judaism, they yet joined in their view of Zionism and Palestine. Thus while Gershom Scholem was hostile to Buber's concept of Judaism in which he missed a hard

scholarly core, he nevertheless played an important role in *Brit Shalom* and in the intellectual and social life of this group.

Liberalism had its share in a nationalism defined as open-ended rather than a finished belief system—a wager Scholem once called it—and which through its very autocracy was supposed to construct a true humanity. This nationalism, I must emphasize, was different both from the normative European nationalism to which Fichte eventually succumbed, and in turn from that of many Zionists themselves. The concept of *Bildung* was central here, it synthesized their ideal of a Jewish homeland, and their attitude to the Hebrew University, which had a central place in such a concept. It must be remembered, as I mentioned earlier, that these men had been educated mostly in schools and universities on the German model which were supposed to transform young adults into respectable *Bildungsbürger*.

The concept of *Bildung* had originated in the stormy last third of the eighteenth century, tied closely to the Enlightenment, and carrying some religious overtones. As Johann Gottfried von Herder defined it, every man has an image within himself of what he is and could be, and as long as he is not yet what he could be, he will be restless. *Bildung* thus meant the shaping of one's self in order to become a harmonious, fully formed personality. As Goethe's Wilhelm Meister put it in what was one of the first German *Bildungsromane*: "to educate myself just the way I am." However, this process of self-formation did not proceed unaided. The development of one's rational faculties was basic to the original concept of *Bildung*, while for Wilhelm von Humboldt, the continuous quest for knowledge was an essential part of the *Bildung* ideal. The exercise of the rational faculties and the quest for knowledge meant that *Bildung* became, above all, an educational principle. Despite Immanuel Kant's exhortation "do not fear to use your reason," *Bildung* had an important historical dimension, emphasizing the past and future. There were models of *Bildung*, like the Greeks or the German classical writers—above all Goethe—which had to be studied and absorbed in order to begin to shape the self. The emphasis on development was always important in *Bildung*, and introduced a historical dimension; change was crucial and that meant that there could be no fixation upon individual sacred texts or traditions which might foreclose the future.*

These Central European Jewish intellectuals believed in individual self-formation aided by the process of education. Zionism was for them, above all,

* However, in Germany the original process of individual, self-formation, was being increasingly restricted by mid-nineteenth century, channeled and directed from the outside. The proper education was meant to produce *Bildungsbürger*, and in Germany the humanistic Gymnasium was elevated above all other schools as the preeminent if not the only means of entering a university. Pedagogy came to replace the original emphasis upon the preeminence of individual reason, and even the ideal of self development tended to be usurped by teachers and professors. Here neo-romanticism and nationalism could take the place of the primary emphasis upon the development of the rational faculties as the content of *Bildung*, while in varying degrees reason and cosmopolitanism could still remain part of the concept. The harmonious personality was always the goal, a striving for unity which had been part of the Enlightenment and of nationalism as well.

an educational enterprise. They could, like Scholem, oppose Enlightenment ideals as designed to frustrate the survival of the Jewish people, and at the same time accept the *Bildung* ideal of critical reason—while their definition of nationalism itself remained open-ended. Scholem was opposed to fore-ordained results and finished products. He was more extreme than others in this belief, and yet agreed with Buber that the unity to which every Jew aspires, the fulfillment of a Jew's potential, is a constant never-ending struggle. To be sure, religious influences, and for Scholem the results of his fundamental scholarly inquiry into the Kabbalah, played a crucial part in their kind of Zionism—and yet the influence of *Bildung* cannot be discounted, for it had been built into their attitudes toward life.

The emphasis upon sociability on the part of such intellectuals, increased by their isolation, was also a central tenet of *Bildung*. Sociability, *Geselligkeit*, was one of its central maxims; learning was experienced as a social process, whether in the company of contemporaries or intellectuals dead and gone. Sociability was therefore not to be taken lightly but was supposed to be an intellectual experience. At many of the regular get-togethers of these Central European intellectuals in Jerusalem a theme was proposed and discussed, at others, contemporary or scholarly topics were addressed in a serious manner. Some, like the Scholems, had regular weekly salons where fellow scholars, their wives, and occasional visitors would meet. It is not possible to imagine any of these men engaged in the patter of an academic cocktail party. Self-examination as well as the detailed accounting for self-development were taken seriously and the Enlightenment cult of friendship informed their social gatherings. The many diaries and autobiographies these men left behind strike us, like Gershom Scholem's, as each a kind of *Bildungsroman*.

The influence of *Bildung* upon this group can be traced in much greater detail, which I have tried to do elsewhere. What is clear is that neo-romanticism, liberalism, and *Bildung* informed not only their formal thought but the kind of books they read, their conversations, and not surprisingly, their attitude towards the new university. *Bildung* is, I think, present in their scholarship as well, certainly in their historical work, though others will have to determine its influence on their analyses of Judaism and philosophy. Intellectually they were as a group after all not as isolated from outside influences as seemed to be the case. For example, Robert Weltsch wrote hopefully as early as 1913, that in these last years the influence of Ahad Ha'am had become ever more crucial among western Zionists, and he went on to compare his ethical imperatives to those of Fichte: The people must be ripe morally and spiritually for the great national undertaking. Hans Kohn, who all his life clung to the rationalism of the enlightenment, saw rather surprisingly in A. D. Gordon a kindred spirit who rejected all force or military action in the building of the new nation, and edited a book on nationalism together with him. But even so, the influence of the Central European intellectuals upon the new university was direct and decisive, though they did not always succeed in their aims.

There was no dispute among these men that the Hebrew University should be foremost a Jewish institution, and they saw the use of Hebrew as an all-important proof of this fact. However, they were on the whole not in favor of starting the University with a series of research institutes, as Chaim Weizman had suggested. Hugo Bergman, for example, librarian and later rector of the University, was keen on outreach: the philosophical faculty should lay the groundwork for a *Volkshochschule*—an adult education program through university extension. The university was conceived as the pinnacle of a general educational enterprise directed by the humanities. Certainly, there are echoes here not only of *Bildung* but of their effort to create support for a humanized nationalism. Their own scholarship departed from the traditional German model in that it was not disguised as impartial and value free, but had a definite aim: they wanted to change the national conscience of the homeland in which they lived. The aim of these intellectuals, starting with Buber's Prague speeches and throughout their later Zionist activity in Palestine, was summed up by Hans Kohn in a letter of 1929 voicing his disappointment with the course which Zionism was taking: the establishment of a Jewish community in Palestine could not constitute an end in itself, it was merely the necessary means to bring about the renaissance of Judaism and the rekindling of its creative individuality. This was certainly different from the view of nationalism as a belief system or as a haven providing security and shelter for the homeless and dispossessed.

By contrast there was to be relatively little open-endedness at their university. The strictest standards of German scholarship were applied from the beginning. Since these standards continue to prevail, they have made the Humanities at the Hebrew University until very recently singularly immune to changing academic fashions. Deconstructionism or even psychohistory, for example, has only recently found a foothold there, and even Michel Foucault has not exercised the dominance which he has gained elsewhere. This scholarly conservatism erected a barrier against fashionable academic movements which have at times influenced universities in the United States. Still, Central European intellectuals could balance rigorous scholarship with advocacy; indeed their Zionist ideals were reinforced and to some extent controlled by their scholarship. This may well be a unique phenomenon.

The negative side of these standards, this conservatism, meant keeping out some exciting innovations and new approaches especially in the Humanities. This has, as I see it, been truer in some departments of the University than others—for example, the new social history has made inroads and so has an anthropological approach. When I first came to the Hebrew University in the 1960s, sole reliance on the archives was still the acid test of historical scholarship. Jacob Talmon's more daring scholarship was regarded with some suspicion by members of this group, especially since his kind of cultural history came from a different, English tradition, more Oxford than Berlin.

A lively debate about the actual structure of the university took place at its founding, and French models like the Collège de France, and English

models as well, were proposed, before a modified German model was adopted. This was to be an *Ordinarien Universität*, a place where in fact, each professor ruled over his own kingdom. Moreover, academic discipline was important to many of them. Hugo Bergman in 1928, for example, demanded a strict system of examinations and regular control over the student's academic progress. Since many of them came from a Germanic background, this system was congenial, though such a departmental structure had also prevailed for some time in the United States. This organizational form held at the Hebrew University until some time after the Second World War, lasting longest in the Humanities. This meant that individuals could put their stamp upon whole departments. Eventually, American influences among others would serve to undermine this structure, until today it would no longer be correct to describe even the structure of the Humanities in this manner.

There was an obvious contradiction between the support of authoritarian structures in education and the open-endedness, individualism, and self cultivation which the original ideal of *Bildung* had advocated. Yet it is important to note that these Central European intellectuals did not follow the evolution of *Bildung* as it had taken place in Germany: they attempted to keep their liberalism and commitment to the classical concept of *Bildung* intact. They believed that the structure of the University did not affect the intrinsic values which they attributed to their Zionism. However, in Central Europe itself the opposite was the case, where an authoritarian educational structure served to support and further an authoritarian cast of mind, and with it a more extreme nationalism. And yet it was an undoubted weakness of these Central European Jewish intellectuals that they were scarcely concerned with political structures, apart from general support for Parliamentary government if not always for the chaos of political parties.

Cultural nationalism was an important aspect of the Zionism which these men espoused. But their specific background gave them their own framework for an approach to the university as well as to Zionism. This led to their growing disillusionment with Zionist reality while maintaining their own outlook upon the nation and politics. The contribution of these intellectuals to scholarship cannot be doubted, nor can their contribution to the Hebrew University. But beyond this I would mention two more spheres of influence, one impossible to grasp with any precision, the other utopian rather than realistic.

They furthered a certain intellectual atmosphere which was continued by their students, many of whom became teachers at the university and in high schools throughout the country. They contributed to an atmosphere of intellectualism which meshed, and in many instances overlapped, with that which came to Palestine from Eastern Europe. These Central European intellectuals in their very isolation produced an exciting intellectual milieu which spread beyond their group. Secondly, their approach to Zionism, though once again also found in others who came to Palestine, was a serious and conscious attempt to solve the dilemma of a nationalist commitment while at the same time retaining a belief

in cosmopolitanism, liberalism, and compromise. They repeated A. D. Gordon's phrase "a human people" in order to describe their Jewish vision. They advocated a German tradition and, with the exception of the university's structure, maintained its enlightened aspect while refusing to follow its descent into aggression and into the arms of a narrow parochial culture.

As these Central European intellectuals lived on into the post-war world they were haunted by their failure as far as the Zionist movement itself was concerned, even though their dream of a Hebrew University had been realized beyond all expectation and was a source of continual pride. Perhaps we should remember what they themselves often forgot, namely that *Bildung* like the Zionism they advocated should be open-ended, and therefore provide hope for the future.

A New Scholarly Colony in Jerusalem: The Early History of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University

DAVID N. MYERS

MORE THAN SEVENTY YEARS AGO, IN ONE OF THE GRAND capitals of the Middle East, a new university was inaugurated. Bearing the name of a great civilization, this university stood as testimony to the efforts of dedicated and earnest men from the Occident (and here the gender-specific language is intended), individuals possessed of a missionary zeal to bring enlightenment, culture, and new standards of academic excellence to the barren shores of the Orient. Their stated aim was not the imposition of Western values but rather a more harmonious convergence of diverse traditions and peoples. The words of the institution's American president attest to this noble ideal: "the University does not have the negative aim of tearing her students from the formal affiliations and ceremonies of the ancient East, but rather the positive aim of sharing with them the spiritual experience of the growing West. The institution forms a link between East and West; a channel for the exchange of ideas between the two."¹

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And yet, beyond this rhetoric of spiritual and cultural ecumenism lay layers of tension, conflict, and resentment which accompanied and threatened the development of the nascent university. The most important of the overlapping circles of conflict revolved around two axes: first, the question of whether the university would be a religious or secular institution, a question which implicated the very method of scholarly analysis permitted within its walls; and second, the paramount issue of whether the university would be governed by foreign norms, values, and overseers, or whether it would reflect, culturally and administratively, its native environment.

It would be most interesting to follow the history of these conflicts from conception to resolution. To do so, however, would be a luxury, since they involved an institution which is not the main subject of this essay. With a certain mischievous delight I must confess that the story I have been relating is not that of the *Hebrew* University of Jerusalem, but rather that of the *American* University of Beirut (AUB). The president whose words were quoted above was not the San Francisco native Judah L. Magnes, but rather Bayard Dodge. And the religious sensibilities that checked the unfettered pursuit of academic scholarship were not orthodox Jewish but rather fundamentalist Protestant.²

The parallel between these two Middle Eastern institutions—the Hebrew and American Universities—is especially striking in their incipient stages of development. One chronicler of the AUB, John Munro, inadvertently happened onto this truth when he accused the first American missionaries who conceived of an outpost of higher learning in Beirut of embodying the spirit of “Hebraism.” Borrowing consciously from Matthew Arnold’s (and, unwittingly, from numerous eighteenth-century European thinkers’) distinction between Hellenism and Hebraism, Munro depicted the latter as the epitome of single-minded and zealous devotion, lacking all trace of spontaneity or malleability. According to Munro, the spirit of Hebraism “was hardly conducive to the establishment of a university in the full humanistic sense of the word.”³

Quite apart from the semantic similarity between the so-called “Hebraism” of the AUB’s founders and the national activism of the Hebrew University’s supporters, there is a shared historical context in which to understand the evolution of the two institutions. Both arose in the midst of persistent debate and disagreement over organizational structure and institutional function. Both were forged through a complex and confusing network of relations among foreign patrons, their administrative and religious allies on the ground, imported faculty, and local students. In this respect, I believe it is fair to say that both universities were mired in a tangled web of relations symptomatic of colonialism.

To speak of such a colonial web summons up images of foreign domination, marked by inevitable and often brutal repression of the native. It is precisely this kind of sharp, politically charged, dichotomy which I hope to avoid when using the term “colonialism.” In the first instance, I use the term to describe not the machinations of imperial powers, but the complex network of relations between Diaspora patrons and Palestine-based administrators and faculty of the

Hebrew University. These relations produced the usual assortment of frustrations and failed expectations, as well as charges of paternalism, typical of state-sponsored colonialism. But there is another connotation for colonialism employed here, one that emerges out of contemporary post-colonial studies. This rendering refers to the cultural practices, identities, and implications emanating from colonial relations. In this vein, it is the effects of colonialism in confounding, not reinforcing, starkly delineated cultural categories—for instance, between foreign and native cultures—that are most interesting. Admittedly, my concern here is not the nature of relations between Jewish settlers and Arab inhabitants in Mandatory Palestine. Instead, it is the way in which European and, to a lesser extent, American sensibilities alternately melded, co-existed, and clashed with the desires and demands of Palestine-based Jews in shaping the Hebrew University and its Institute of Jewish Studies.

To illuminate this interaction, I will describe the contest among competing conceptions of a Jewish national university in Palestine, most of which were hatched first in Europe. The transfer of these ideas from the European laboratory to the testing grounds of Palestine was itself beset with tensions and conflict, as was the very Zionist ideology that undergirded them. Consequently, there were pendulous swings in the early institutional history of the Hebrew University. While following these various turns in institutional organization, I also aim to convey the story of the first generation of scholars, almost all European-born, who immigrated to Palestine and laid the foundation for Jewish studies at the Hebrew University.⁴ It is these figures who best exemplify the complex cultural effects of colonialism—at least in the sense of the term I intend. Raised in Gentile milieux which required a greater or lesser submersion of Jewish cultural and national identity, the future scholars of Jerusalem lived an existence akin to that of colonized peoples. They were acutely aware of their diminished capacity to shape their own Jewish world in Europe, and strove to attain a measure of cultural and, specifically scholarly, self-empowerment—quite literally, to write themselves back into history.⁵

The route to legitimation, both national and professional, necessitated the creation of a new bastion of critical scholarship in the distant land of Israel. There, it was hoped, scholarship could be pursued without apologetic tendencies. This goal could be accomplished by arming the new fortress of Jewish research with quintessentially European notions of objectivity, scholarly probity, and disciplinary organization.

It is here that we encounter a curious set of paradoxes. The first generation of researchers at the Hebrew University attempted to upend their own “colonial” experience in the Diaspora by becoming scholarly colonizers, not so much of other peoples as of a cultural territory—namely, the new *Yishuv*. With solemn pride, they planted the flag of *Wissenschaft* into the soil of Palestine. In doing so, they were intent not only on validating themselves as professional scholars, but on assuring that a secure, even sacred, space for “science” be created in Palestine.⁶ To a certain extent, they succeeded in

carving out a niche for themselves in the *Yishuv*—as arbiters of scholarly virtue. That this task was at odds with the pioneering ethos of the dominant labor Zionist movement in Palestine at the time is an important theme, but one which can not detain us now. What is germane and intriguing is a point hinted at above: the Jerusalem scholars never fully succeeded in remaking themselves. They never fully exorcised European values and sensibilities after moving to *Erets Yisra'el*. Paradoxically, at times they also found themselves in conflict with the wealthy Diaspora patrons who supported the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University. Straddling the poles of colonizer and colonized, the Jerusalem scholars thereby embodied the dynamic social status, as well as the cultural hybridity, that often results from the colonial experience.

The notion of cultural hybridity, of a status that stubbornly resists the fixed identities of foreigner and native, surfaces frequently in the writings of contemporary scholars and critics.⁷ Not surprisingly, the emergence of this idea has come at the end of the age of classic European colonialism.⁸ With the benefit of historical perspective, we now recognize that the encounter of the colonizer and the colonized involved not merely political repression, but also an ongoing exchange and reformulation of social, cultural, and linguistic norms. The philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah has perhaps best captured the dynamic and somewhat subversive quality of this exchange in speaking of his native Africa. There, Appiah notes, “European languages and European disciplines have been ‘turned,’ like double agents, from the projects of the metropole to the intellectual work of the post colonial cultural life.”⁹ Appiah’s image of the double agent subverts the conventional assumption of colonialism as a hegemonic and monolithic force. This image also seems strikingly applicable to the first-generation Jerusalem scholars, who came to Palestine as bearers of European academic standards and yet hoped to rid themselves of ignoble vestiges of Diaspora life. Curiously, their own divided sense of cultural identities in Palestine mirrored that which they had hoped to leave behind in Europe. Indeed, for the Jerusalem scholars, the return to Zion purged neither ambivalence nor ambiguity from the Jewish condition. This last observation has special salience in light of the highly charged debate in Israeli and Jewish circles over Zionism.¹⁰ Serious questions have been raised of late regarding the historical character and future relevance of Zionism. Without addressing these questions directly, I would suggest that their mere posing by Israeli intellectuals, coming at a distinct moment in Israeli history, offers the possibility for a constructive re-evaluation of the past.¹¹ And so, in this spirit of constructive re-evaluation I now turn to the fledgling development of Jewish studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

2. Similar to the American University of Beirut, the Hebrew University was imagined by a group of people far removed from its proposed site. European Jews had been dreaming of a specifically Jewish university at least as far back as the sixteenth century when the Italian rabbi, David Provenzali, offered up

an ambitious plan for an academy of higher learning for Jews.¹² However, a far more concentrated focus on the idea of a Jewish university emerged in the late nineteenth century, set in motion by the programmatic initiatives of one Hermann Zvi Schapira. Schapira was a Lithuanian rabbi who underwent an unlikely mid-life career shift: after a time as a *rosh yeshivah*, he became interested in secular studies, decided to concentrate on mathematics, and eventually became an *extraordinarius* professor at the University of Heidelberg. In a series of articles appearing in the Hebrew periodical *Ha-Melits* in 1882, Schapira proposed the creation of a Jewish institution of higher learning to be based in Palestine.¹³ This institution would have three faculties—theoretical-scientific, practical-scientific, and rabbinical (the last of which recalls the early efforts of American missionaries on behalf of a religious college in Beirut); and, though based in Palestine, the Jewish institution's language of instruction would be German, since Schapira did not yet deem Hebrew a suitable language of academic instruction. (We might again note the parallel to the American University of Beirut, where supporters of English insisted that *it*, not Arabic, be the language of instruction.) At this stage in time, there was little financial or popular support for Schapira's idea. Nonetheless, Schapira was given the opportunity to present his ideas on a Jewish institution in Palestine to the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. Despite the limited time allotted to him, he was greeted, according to the Congress protocols, with thunderous applause.¹⁴

Shortly thereafter, the elderly Schapira passed away, bringing to a close the brief first phase in the modern history of the Jewish university idea.¹⁵ From this point forward, the history of the university idea became inextricably linked to the unfolding tale of the nascent Zionist movement. Particularly noteworthy was the keen interest of young Zionist intellectuals in the university cause. In 1902, three of the more prominent of these intellectuals, Martin Buber, Berthold Feiwel, and Chaim Weizmann co-authored a German pamphlet, *Eine Jüdische Hochschule*, which outlined the formation of a Jewish institution of higher learning comprising technical, natural-scientific, and humanities faculties. Curiously, the pamphlet's authors suggested that the institution could be established, at least provisionally, in Europe. The three Zionists were concerned by the troubled lot of Jewish students in Eastern Europe, where political unrest, economic hardship, and quotas on university attendance threatened their physical and emotional well-being. The joint proposal was a good deal more responsive to the concrete social conditions of the day than Hermann Zvi Schapira's call for a college in Palestine. However, it too failed to galvanize the support of the broader Zionist movement which had not yet—and, for that matter, never wholly—embraced the university idea.

It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that the university idea commanded more serious attention among Zionists. By that time, the territorial question that plagued the movement in the "Uganda" controversy had been resolved. The locus of Zionist aspirations was unques-

tionably Palestine; so too it would be the site of a Jewish national university. Indeed, the Eleventh Zionist Congress in Vienna in 1913 authorized the formation of a committee charged with drawing up detailed plans for the university, including the purchase of land in Jerusalem.¹⁶ But beyond the shared assumption that the university would be in Palestine, there was little consensus among supporters of the university idea. To begin with, there were many Zionists who opposed the idea altogether, believing such a recondite project to be a waste of precious resources. The prospect of creating a new generation of *Luftmenschen*—an overflowing “intellectual proletariat,” as one opponent put it—violated the emerging Zionist ethic of physical labor, self-help, and ascetic sacrifice.¹⁷ Moreover, it seemed to perpetuate the very patterns of Diaspora life—passive study rather than active building—that Zionism aimed to overturn. Still, there were more than a few Zionists who supported the idea of a university. Some believed that it would serve as a place of refuge for Jewish scholars and students denied a place in European institutions. Others believed that a university, as the training ground for a new generation of Palestine-based Jews, filled an indispensable function in the work of nation-building. Yet others envisaged an elite center of pure research in which the world’s leading Jewish scholars would be gathered.

It is imperative to note that just as there were Zionists who opposed the university idea, so there were non-Zionists who supported it. As a matter of fact, the most prominent supporters of the university idea in the 1910s included a number of distinguished European Jews who were agnostic over the larger Zionist enterprise. In particular, the French financier, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and the German scientist and Nobel Laureate, Paul Ehrlich, surfaced as leading advocates of the university idea. In order to obtain the financial backing of Rothschild and the approbation of Ehrlich, Chaim Weizmann, who was the great champion of the university idea in Zionist circles of the day, was forced to adopt their preference for a center of pure research that housed a small group of distinguished scholars.¹⁸ This idea was to be a central, if not dominant, one until the founding of the Hebrew University in 1925. Even after its formal opening, various supporters of the university continued to subscribe to the model of a small research center, in part out of fear that a more open and popular institution would quickly degenerate to the level of a third-rate teaching faculty.

To be sure, it was not merely this fear which impelled the idea of a research center. It was partly a matter of creating an institution on a scale commensurate with available resources.¹⁹ It was also a function of the powerful research ethic which held sway over Jewish intellectuals in Europe from the mid-nineteenth century.²⁰ This ethic was imparted to Jewish scholars in the historical and philological seminars of German universities; concomitantly, it provided content to *Wissenschaft*, the magically resonant term which defined academic excellence and, to a certain extent, cultural identity among Jewish intellectuals in Europe.²¹ From the mid-nineteenth century onward, both

practitioners and patrons of Jewish scholarship insisted that any serious institution of higher learning be based on the foundation of *Wissenschaft*, as measured by established rules of objective methodology.

Apart from these considerations, there may well have been another motive present. The idea of a small research center as the core, if not totality, of a Jewish university in Palestine was largely the province of non-Zionist supporters. When encountering figures such as Rothschild and Ehrlich or later, Cyrus Adler, Adolph Büchler, Israel Lévy, and Felix Warburg, one gets the distinct impression that their involvement in the university project was, in part, a gambit to control potential Zionist excesses.²²

Interestingly, these figures did not object to the idea of a major research center in *Palestine*. The momentum of Zionist support for the project had effectively rendered the question of location a moot one. But there would be no compromise on the model of an elite research center. The non-Zionists sought to insure that European standards of scholarship prevail in Jerusalem. Their demands were not mere bluster either. Rothschild in the 1910s and Warburg in the 1920s provided major subvention for the university project. Indeed, it was Warburg's gift of \$500,000 which allowed the Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem to open in December 1924, some three months before the inauguration of the Hebrew University of which it became part.

Warburg diverged from other non-Zionists in one important regard: he was not interested in maintaining ultimate administrative control from abroad. Warburg was coaxed into university affairs by the enterprising American-born Reform rabbi, Judah L. Magnes, who left Jewish communal life in New York in 1922 to move to Palestine. Magnes, a passionate advocate of the Hebrew University for nearly a decade, acted as Warburg's proxy in Jerusalem. Warburg, in turn, insisted that Magnes and other local supporters be entrusted with administrative control of the university. Indeed, by the early 1920s, some of the most important Zionist supporters of the Hebrew University had moved to Palestine. In 1922, a committee on behalf of a Hebrew college in Jerusalem was established which included such long-time proponents of the university idea as Magnes, Menachem Ussishkin, Yosef Klausner, and Ahad Ha-'am.²³ This committee supported the regnant idea of a small-scale institution, at least at the outset. At the same time, it sought to satisfy an audience whose existence was barely considered by non-Zionist supporters hitherto: Jewish students, both local and foreign, for whom opportunities of university study, especially in Jewish studies, were severely limited.²⁴

The emergence of a local lobby for the university introduced a new force in the balance of power of university politics. Emblematic of this development was Felix Warburg's abdication of authority to Judah Magnes. But this did not reflect, by any means, a complete surrender of authority by Diaspora supporters. Leading non-Zionists remained committed to preserving control over academic affairs through supervisory bodies such as the Governing Council of the Institute of Jewish Studies and the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University. Perhaps

even more surprising was the fact that the World Zionist Organization and its president, Chaim Weizmann, insisted on organizational control over the university from London, not Jerusalem. In explaining the rationale, Weizmann's assistant, M. D. Eder, declared in 1925 that "there does not yet exist in Palestine that intellectual atmosphere which is essential for the evolution of a university in general and particularly one that is intended to represent the intellectual traditions and give scope to the foremost intellectual workers of world Jewry."²⁵

Upon reflection, there would seem to be a deep incongruity in the fact that Weizmann and the official Zionist movement discouraged local Palestine control over the Hebrew University. Was this not the very objective of Zionism? As is so often the case in Jewish organizational life, one can explain such an unlikely position as the result of antagonism between leading personalities—as I shall presently. But the generally confused state of jurisdictional control and institutional conception was the product of a larger phenomenon: namely, the difficult enterprise of projecting an institutional model conceived in Europe onto the *terra incognita* of Palestine. The resilient demands of Diaspora Jews, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, to conduct the business of a university located in Palestine rested on a paternalistic skepticism in the ability of the locals to guide their own affairs. Such a description hints, and not so subtly, at a colonialist relationship in which the foreigner dictates to the local. And yet, there was one curious feature to this relationship that requires mention: both sides, the subjects and objects of the colonialist arrangement, were in their origins the same people. There were virtually no Jews born in Palestine involved in the creation of the Hebrew University, with the notable exception of the scholar David Yellin, scion of a distinguished Sephardi family from the old *Yishuv*. All of Yellin's comrades in the struggle to establish a university were Europeans or, to a lesser extent, Americans. Not surprisingly, those Diaspora Jews who made their way to Palestine lived an entirely different existence than those who remained in the Diaspora. They faced new life conditions which significantly altered their priorities and expectations, and created resentment and hostility toward European kin.

Notwithstanding these sentiments, it was in the spirit of harmony that the Institute of Jewish Studies was inaugurated on Jerusalem's barren Mt. Scopus on December 22, 1924. This event marked the culmination of several years of intense negotiations among diverse parties from Europe, America, and Palestine. It also marked the apparent victory of the concept of a small-scale center whose main function was to carry out research. Optimism was in the air, as speaker after speaker heralded the occasion as an historic one in the annals of Jewish learning, often punctuating their remarks with the traditional liturgical refrain: "From Zion will go forth Torah."

Behind the soaring oratory lay a far grimmer reality. Chaim Weizmann was seething in London, wedded to the mistaken belief that he, president of the World Zionist Organization, had not been invited to the opening of the Institute of Jewish Studies. The fact that the letter inviting Weizmann arrived

after the inauguration was sufficient cause for ire.²⁶ Even more disturbing to Weizmann was the fear that he might be losing control of university affairs.²⁷

Chaim Weizmann's anger was not based merely on institutional considerations. His antipathy for Judah Magnes, a one-time friend and collaborator, was increasing daily. Weizmann doubted Magnes' ability to lead, distrusted his progressive politics, and, above all, feared his widening influence. The growing antipathy would be an important factor in the early history of the Hebrew University. It increased in 1925–26 as a result of a new arrangement by which the World Zionist Organization at last ceded formal claim to the University; however, as part of the bargain, Chaim Weizmann became chairman of the Hebrew University's Board of Governors with a mandate to conduct University affairs abroad. One need not be expert in organizational management to see the potential for administrative discord between Magnes in Jerusalem and Weizmann in London. The structural tension was exacerbated by personal distaste, leading to a climax in the 1930s when Weizmann sought to supplant Magnes altogether as chief administrative officer of the Hebrew University.

But that is getting ahead of our story. Around the opening of the Institute of Jewish Studies in 1924, Weizmann's voice of discontent was not a solitary one. Such voices were even heard in Palestine. For example, the Jerusalem-based scholar Joseph Klausner, whom Judah Magnes counted as one of his few friends, lambasted the new Institute as the creation of "non-nationalist religious men."²⁸ Klausner deeply resented the interference of Diaspora Jewry, particularly non-Zionists, in what he regarded as an essential national mission (one aspect of which was getting him an appointment at the Hebrew University). He would have certainly agreed with the assessment of a fellow Zionist based in London, Robert Weltsch, who called the Institute a "proper 'Golus' institution."²⁹ Weltsch had uppermost in mind the list of candidates being considered to serve as the Institute's faculty; most were older scholars who taught in the modern rabbinical seminaries which were established in the mid-nineteenth century in Germany, Austria, and Hungary. In fact, rabbinical seminaries *were* the training grounds for modern Jewish scholars. Ironically, the university professorate was not yet open to Jews in those countries where Jewish scholarship had reached its most developed state. As a result, it was in rabbinical seminaries that serious students were trained and that serious scholars were employed.³⁰ And it was from these seminaries that the largest pool of qualified candidates for the faculty of the Institute of Jewish Studies was drawn.

The demography of Jewish scholarship thus assured a strong Diaspora presence in Jerusalem. Invariably, the new scholars in Jerusalem carried with them disciplinary priorities, organizational schemes, and a strong commitment to the research ethic they had absorbed in European universities. But they were quickly immersed in a world in which they were valued not as research scholars, but as popular national pedagogues. For some, particularly the Eastern Europeans, the shift in locale was not particularly jarring. Figures such as Ben-Zion Dinur, Joseph Klausner, and Simha Assaf easily fell into the role

of teacher. For others, such as the German historian Fritz Baer, there was a great deal of dissonance between their old and new functions.

Baer had spent the previous decade of his life employed in an institution of pure Jewish research in Berlin where he had no pedagogic responsibilities. In Jerusalem, he was not only engaged to *teach* Jewish history; he became, upon arrival in 1930, the entire department of Jewish history at the Hebrew University.³¹ This obviously entailed a major change in function for Baer. But it also reflected a broader institutional shift. By this time, the original model of a small-scale research center was no longer deemed tenable. In fact, from the opening of the Institute of the Jewish Studies, student interest surpassed any previous expectation.³² The result was a renewed debate in 1925–26 over the function of the Institute. A committee of inquiry headed by the English-Jewish scientist, Selig Brodetsky, was created with the explicit charge to navigate between the competing poles of teaching and research. Leading Diaspora members of the Institute's Governing Council, particularly the chief rabbis of France and England (Israel Lévy and Joseph Hertz), feared that the introduction of a full curriculum of instruction would create a "degree factory."³³ By contrast, advocates of an institution geared to the needs of local Jewish youth in Palestine inveighed against the prevailing model of a "research monastery."³⁴ After considerable discussion, the Brodetsky committee decided on a course of action which acknowledged the wisdom of an institution responsive to local needs. Ever cautious not to alienate Diaspora supporters, the Brodetsky committee recommended the *gradual* introduction of regular instruction, commencing with study at the master's level in a new Faculty of the Humanities.³⁵ The implementation of this decision signified an important first step in the localization of the Institute of Jewish Studies and the Hebrew University. Indeed, the new attention to local Jewish demands indicated that the University was sinking roots in the soil of Palestine.³⁶

Were this process a linear one, our story might well conclude here. It would be a tale of liberation, the liberation of Jewish scholarship not only from its oppressive European environment, but from colonialist Diaspora control. In fact, the unique example of Zionism—"the last, least typical of European nationalisms," in Trevor-Roper's words—complicates any such prospect.³⁷ In one important respect, Zionism was indeed typical of European nationalist movements. It was the paradigmatic case of the invention or imagination of a national community, in the sense conveyed by Anderson, Gellner, Hobsbawm and other adepts of the new discourse of nationalism.³⁸ Perhaps in no other case were a national language and land such abstract constructs to the masses upon whom a cultural elite sought to leave its imprint. Perhaps in no other case then was the task of imagining a national community so imaginative.

But it is precisely in the linguistic and territorial void that the uniqueness of Zionism lies. Reviving Hebrew and transporting the Jewish people to its ancient homeland required an immense outlay of psychic and material resources. Until these processes were consummated, Zionism would remain an

anomaly among nationalisms. For its constituency was not national in conventional territorial terms; it was global in its widespread dispersion.³⁹ Without question, this basic anomaly became part of the very foundation on which the Hebrew University stood.

Recall, for instance, that supporters of the University expressed concern not only over the welfare of Jewish youth in Palestine, but periodically of European Jewish students and scholars as well. This concern became a matter of official university policy in 1933 with Adolf Hitler's rise to power in Germany. At that point, the University's Board of Governors established a special committee to plan the rescue of displaced Jewish scholars from Europe.⁴⁰ But this committee was charged with another function which also attested to the international scope of the University: a systematic review of the University's administration. What, one might ask, was international about that? In the first place, a major impetus behind this charge came from Chaim Weizmann, now in the second act of his long-distance drama with Judah Magnes.⁴¹ Weizmann's dissatisfaction with Magnes had grown exponentially over the course of a decade, and he now had as an ally one of the University's most important supporters, Albert Einstein, who had been interested in the University's cause since the early 1920s. Everyone, including Magnes, wanted to retain the world-renowned scientist as a friend of the University. In fact, when Magnes heard that Einstein had questioned his competence in running the University, he offered to give him any position he desired in the Jerusalem institution.⁴² He was less generous with Weizmann, who had been his persistent adversary in the struggle to control the University.

Beyond the deep personal animosity of two men, discontent with Magnes' management of the University began to catch the attention of the University's trustees. The early 1930s were a difficult time for the new institution; the recent global depression, political unrest in Palestine, and difficulties in attracting distinguished faculty contributed to a sense of malaise. Magnes, at once earnest and guileful as chief administrator, was an obvious target. In search of solutions to overcome the current torpor, the Board of Governors created the Survey Committee in 1933. The Committee's members included Prof. Louis Ginzberg, Dr. Redcliffe Salaman, and its chair, Sir Philip Hartog. I hasten to comment here that committees of review are hardly unknown in the history of universities; along with boards of trustees, they often inspire dark fears of usurpation of authority and paternalistic intervention. Indeed, this was the case with the Survey Committee. The composition of the committee underscored the quasi-colonial relations which still obtained between the University's supporters abroad and in Palestine. To begin with, the chairman of the committee, Philip Hartog, was a British scientist with considerable administrative experience in university affairs, particularly in colonial India. Hartog had, for instance, chaired a major review commission for the Calcutta University, and later served as first vice-chancellor of the University of Dacca.⁴³

If Judah Magnes had not been fearful of Hartog's colonial credentials prior to his arrival, it did not take long. The Survey Committee quickly set out to interview long lists of what were formally called "witnesses." Magnes himself was subjected to lengthy interviews with the committee members, the transcripts of which hint more at an interrogation into a crime than a friendly review. Magnes was caught in webs of inconsistencies as he tried to respond to questions concerning his style of management. Though appreciative of Magnes' "single-minded devotion to the cause of the University," the committee members were sharply critical of his administration.⁴⁴ The objections ranged from the seemingly trivial claim that the University "possesses no common rooms or refectories" of the kind found in Western universities to the larger charge that Magnes had "a fundamental misconception . . . of what a University should be."⁴⁵ No longer could the university tolerate Magnes' merging of the functions of "Chancellor and Dictator," to borrow the language of the report.⁴⁶ To remedy the situation, the Survey Committee recommended the abolition of the position of Chancellor, and the creation of the new position of provost to be filled by a professional administrator.

The Hartog committee thus set in motion a substantial overhaul of the Hebrew University, which included stripping Judah Magnes of control over the University in Palestine. The initiators and implementers of this strategy came, in the main, from abroad. And their work signaled the ongoing importance of Diaspora Jewry to the Hebrew University. What also reinforced this message was the other main task of the Survey Committee: helping to facilitate the absorption of displaced Jewish scholars from Europe.⁴⁷ By overseeing the integration of new scholars from Europe, the Committee was assuring a continuing Diaspora presence in the University. In this respect, the committee's work in 1933–34 marked a certain reversal in the trend toward localization that the University followed from 1926. In fact, the swing toward a more international mission and audience continued to compete with the localizing trend for years to come—throughout the Nazi genocidal campaign against European Jewry, though less so in the immediate aftermath of the creation of the State of Israel.

3. It was the web of relations between foreigners and locals that initially impelled the analogy between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the American University of Beirut. As in the latter case, it is too facile to explain the development of the Hebrew University in the stark terms of colonial domination over local natives. In both instances, the leading faculty and administrators on the ground were themselves of foreign birth or nationality. Moreover, in both cases, the founding faculty and administrators saw themselves as embarked on a *mission civilisatrice*, specifically to introduce Western standards of academic excellence to the Middle East. Virtually all of the first-generation Jerusalem scholars, those from both East and Central Europe, had studied in Germany where they were exposed to the methods and standards of validation of

Wissenschaft. Many expressed the desire to make Jewish scholarship comparable in quality to the work of scholars of German or French history—to create, in the words of Ernst Simon, a “European sister-science.”⁴⁸ This aspiration persisted, even intensified, despite the fact that professional Jewish scholars and their subject matter were effectively excluded from the German university system.

The resulting mix of intellectual emulation and institutional disenfranchisement created interesting consequences. In collective psychological terms, the movement of Jewish scholars from Europe to Palestine represented a response to the failure to gain access to the academic workplace. But this response, I emphasize, hardly meant that European sensibilities were effaced. The Jerusalem neighborhood of Rehavia where many of the transplanted scholars made their new home had a distinctly *mitteleuropäische* air to it. It became a kind of “little Berlin,” replete with cafés, salons, and reading circles.⁴⁹ Similarly, the new Jerusalem university which employed the European scholars reflected the principles of academic and administrative order which they brought with them from European seminaries.

A few brief examples will suffice to support this claim. First, the new scholarly center in Jerusalem was intended to provide new vitality and direction to the field of Jewish studies. As part of this new impetus, the Bible—the favored classical source of Zionists—was to be accorded a central place in the curriculum of the Hebrew University. On the surface, it would seem that such a priority entailed diminished attention to the Talmud, the normative textual authority for Diaspora Jewry. As a matter of fact, the early history of the Institute of Jewish Studies demonstrates precisely the opposite. Talmudic and rabbinic literature won ample faculty representation, while no permanent professor in Bible was appointed for almost a decade and a half. The reasons are more complex than I can explicate at this point.⁵⁰ One of the primary reasons was surely the influence of Diaspora overseers of the Institute such as Joseph Hertz and Israel Lévy, who not only were committed to the study of Talmud, but resisted modern critical approaches in Biblical scholarship. But another major contributing factor was the relative abundance of professional scholars of the Talmud and the relative dearth of professional scholars of the Bible. Here, the recurrent claim heard in the early years that the Institute replicated the Diaspora rabbinical seminary seems to have real merit. For the Institute not only continued the disciplinary emphasis of the German seminaries. It did so with scholars drawn from the seminaries themselves, who perpetuated the curricular and research emphases of their former institutional base in Europe.

There was another important way in which the first-generation Jerusalem scholars revealed their European origins. One might have expected that as a group devoted to a new scholarly center in Zion, they would have followed the political Zionist tenet of “negation of the Diaspora.” After all, denigration of the Diaspora’s historical significance would seem to issue naturally from the new-found centrality of *Erets Yisra’el* in Jewish history among Jerusalem scholars. But even those committed to a baldly “Palestinocentric” perspective, most

notably, Ben-Zion Dinur, were loath to discard the Diaspora past from the historical memory of the Jewish nation. Rather, for Dinur and others, the Diaspora witnessed the preservation of Jewish national identity and culture, and thus was an inextricable, though also instrumental, component of Jewish history.⁵¹ Instead of erasing Diaspora communal existence from the historical record, the first-generation Jerusalem scholars investigated the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of that existence, hoping in part to find historical precursors for contemporary political experiments.⁵² That they were themselves born and bred in the Diaspora hardly seems unrelated to their appreciative perspective on its history. Notwithstanding this point, discussions of the “Jerusalem school” all too often neglect the complex attitudes and positions of Jerusalem scholars to the (and their own) Diaspora past.⁵³ The most renowned of all Jerusalem scholars, Gershom Scholem, gave poignant expression to this complexity in a bitter requiem for Jewish scholarship in 1944. Beset with deep anguish over the ongoing genocide of Europe’s Jews, Scholem took stock of the purported advances of his Jerusalem colleagues over their Diaspora teachers and predecessors. Rather than introduce radical change, they had replicated many qualities of their scorned forebears. This realization prompted Scholem to conclude, in a sweeping indictment of his own generation: “We came to rebel, and ended up continuing.”⁵⁴

It may well be the case that as the Institute of Jewish Studies become more acclimated to Palestine, and as a native cohort of Jewish scholars arose, the unwitting tendency of the first generation to continue waned. To a great extent, the study of Jewish history in Jerusalem in succeeding generations became a more local affair—that is, more the study of a nation in a conventional territorial sense.⁵⁵ But this development should not obscure the fascinating tensions of the founding generation of Jerusalem scholars. They were exemplary cultural hybrids, never fully at home either in Europe or Palestine, and perhaps secretly reveling in their marginality. Their scholarship swayed between the poles of Zionism and *jüdische Wissenschaft*, as they sought to re-invent the Jewish past while using organizational models and the guiding ethos of their predecessors in Germany. And yet, in one significant regard, the Jerusalem scholars provided definitive resolution to a Diaspora dilemma. They and their teachers were shunted to the periphery of academic life in Europe. In Jerusalem, they became the masters, intent on imposing European standards of scholarship and objectivity. Indeed, it was there, in the midst of an intricate web of relations between Diaspora and “local” Jews, that the Jerusalem scholars created a new scholarly colony some seventy years ago.

ENDNOTES

1. The words of Bayard Dodge from his Inaugural Address of 1923 are quoted in John M. Munro, *A Mutual Concern: The Story of the American University of Beirut* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1977), pp. 75–76.

2. A curious episode in the early history of the American University of Beirut, or more accurately, its precursor—the Syrian Protestant College—occurred in 1882 when a young lecturer, Edwin Lewis, was forced to resign after delivering a commencement address which referred admiringly to the work of Darwin. This recourse to Darwin transgressed the fundamentalist attitudes towards Biblical accounts of creation held by the College's Board of Trustees and administration. See Munro, *A Mutual Concern*, pp. 26–30.
3. Munro, *A Mutual Concern*, p. 2. Later Munro records, it was the “Hebraists” who took the day when Darwinism was suppressed at the AUB's precursor, the Syrian Protestant College, in the late nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, 35.
4. For a fuller analysis of the Jerusalem scholars and their role in creating the Hebrew University's Institute of Jewish Studies, see David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
5. In this respect, they bear some resemblance to the anti-colonial nationalists whom Partha Chatterjee has identified in the rather different context of Bengal. Chatterjee calls attention to a non-political form of nationalist activity centered around the spiritual, as distinct from material, domain. This model, though originating in opposition to Western models of nationalism, can perhaps be of value in analyzing a range of Jewish cultural activists in the early twentieth century including Zionists, autonomists, and Bundists. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 6.
6. Various speakers at the opening of the Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem on December 22, 1924 emphasized the *sacred* mission of the Institute, specifically by equating modern scholarship and Torah. See, for example, the speeches of Judah L. Magnes and Max Margolis in *Yedi'ot ha-Makhon le-mada'e ha-Yahadut* 1 (1925).
7. See, for instance, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), and Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993).
8. The idea of cultural hybridity, of a dynamic cultural identity formed at the borders of contiguous or overlapping group identities, is not a new one. For an interesting adumbration, see Randolph S. Bourne, “The Jew and Trans-National America,” *The Menorah Journal* 2 (December 1916): 280.
9. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 56.
10. For a sampling of views in the ongoing debate over “post-Zionism,” see the special volume on “Israeli Historiography Revisited” in *History and Memory* 7 (Spring/Summer 1995). See also the divergent viewpoints represented in a symposium on post-Zionism, “Al Tsiyonut, post-Tsiyonut ve-anti-Tsiyonut” in *Ha-arets*, November 15, 1995: 4B.
11. In this respect, it is interesting to compare the new “post-Zionist” critiques of Zionism to post-colonial revisitings of colonialism. In suggesting this comparison, I do not mean to equate Zionism and colonialism, though this is a hotly contested issue in the current Israeli debates. Rather, I mean to emphasize that the culmination of an historical epoch—of European colonialism, on one hand, and of a certain stage of Israeli history (i.e., the phase of unrelenting conflict with the Arab world), on the other—brings with it the opportunity to explore the foundation myths underlying guiding ideologies.
12. In 1566, Provenzali and his son Abraham produced a plan for such an academy that would include Talmud and Hebrew studies along with subjects from the canon of Renaissance humanism: Latin, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and medicine. See Cecil Roth, *The Jews in the Renaissance* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959), p. 42. For a brief, helpful survey of the university idea, see David Biale, “The Idea of a Jewish University,” in *Like All the Nations? The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes*, edited by William M. Brinner and Moses Rischin (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 127–137.
13. Schapira's initial suggestions appeared in *Ha-Melits* 22 (1882): 437–438. Subsequent discussions can be found in *Ha-Melits* 26 (1882): 528, 723, and *Ha-Melits* 29 (1884): 85.

14. See the *Officielles Protocoll. Zionisten-Congress in Basel, 29. 30. und 31 August 1897* (Vienna, 1898), p. 189.
15. On Schapira and subsequent plans for a Jewish university, see Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 42–43.
16. For a more detailed analysis of the university project in this period, see Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 46–47.
17. The Belgian Zionist, Jean Fisher, articulated the concern about such a proletariat arising in Palestine. See Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 380.
18. On Weizmann's efforts to gain the support of Rothschild and Ehrlich, see Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 47.
19. This view was contained in a report published by the Keren Ha-Yesod based on the Annual Zionist Conference of July 1920 as *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (London, 1921), p. 8.
20. On the important role of the research ethic in the German university system, see Charles M. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 151–189.
21. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 19. The central place of *Wissenschaft* in German-Jewish society suggests that this notion served either as complement or successor to the idea of *Bildung*, as expertly analyzed by George Mosse, in *German Jews beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), and his essay in this issue, “Central European Intellectuals in Palestine.”
22. Reflective of this perspective was Cyrus Adler's damning judgment of Joseph Klausner's book, *Yeshu ha-Notzri*. Adler denounced this book as “one of the first unfortunate products of that scientific and cultural revival” that Zionism sought to engender. Adler's remark is contained in a letter from 1924 to Louis Marshall, and published in Ira Robinson, *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, Vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985), pp. 93–94.
23. The committee advanced a proposal for a “mikhlah la-ivrit birushalayim (Hebrew college in Jerusalem).” See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 51.
24. While responsive to these students, the Jerusalem committee was also prompted to action by reports that various groups—British Mandatory authorities, as well as local Muslims and Christians—were developing plans to establish universities in Jerusalem. Three years earlier, in 1919, the Syrian Protestant College was formally renamed the American University of Beirut, heralding a new era for higher education in the Levant. All of this activity apparently produced a new local impetus, even urgency, to establish a Jewish institution of higher learning in Palestine.
25. Eder offered the assessment in a letter of 24 July 1925 to Felix Warburg. The letter is contained in the Felix Warburg Papers of the American Jewish Archives, box 222. See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 60.
26. In a letter to Magnes of December 25, 1924, Weizmann expressed his surprise at having read of the Institute's opening in the previous day's *London Times*. He received a letter of invitation for the opening on December 27. See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 204, n. 100.
27. In particular, Weizmann felt that the opening of the Institute would overshadow the inauguration of the broader Hebrew University some months later. Magnes attempted to assuage Weizmann on this particular point in a letter from January 12, 1925 which is contained in the Magnes Papers, American Jewish Archives, box 154.
28. Klausner, “Lifetihah ha-Makhon la-mada'e ha-Yahadut,” *Ha-Universitah ha-Ivrit birushalayim* (Jerusalem, 1925): 34.
29. Weltsch's comment came in a letter to Martin Buber from June 23, 1924 in Buber's *Briefwechsel aus sieben Jahrzehnten*, vol. 2 (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1973), p. 195.
30. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 21–22.
31. On Baer's transition from Berlin to Jerusalem, see Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 109–128.

32. Student enthusiasm is reflected in the report contained in *Yedi'ot ha-Makhon le-mada'e ha-Yahadut* 1 (1925): 76–77.

33. See the report of the Brodetsky Committee, “Report on Teaching and Research in and Publications by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem,” page 10. A copy of this report can be found in the Central Archives for the Hebrew University, file 178/II.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

35. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 63.

36. For some of the recent scholarly transplants from Europe, this development must have been somewhat chastening. And yet, the experience on the ground necessitated a quick realignment of perspective. Gershom Scholem, the young German scholar of Jewish mysticism, apprehended that the new University did not possess the financial or even human resources to become a major research center in an instant. Scholem’s letter of 4 Tevet 5687 (December 9, 1926) is found in the Central Archives for the Hebrew University, file 178/II (1926).

37. See Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Jewish and Other Nationalisms* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), p. 23.

38. See, for example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For a recent attempt to apply the insights of the new critical discourse on nationalism to the Jewish case, see Uri Ram, “Zionist Historiography and the Invention of Modern Jewish Nationhood: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur,” *History and Memory* 7 (Spring/Summer 1995), pp. 91–124.

39. This observation was evident already to those first agitating toward a nationalist definition for Jewish culture in the nineteenth century. See, for instance, Peretz Smolenskin’s comments in *Ha-Shahar* 1 (5) (1869): 4. This idea also animated Simon Dubnow in his monumental *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1925). See Dubnow’s introductory remarks, excerpted in *Ideas of Jewish History*, edited by Michael A. Meyer (New York: Behrman House, 1974), p. 259.

40. See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 68–72, and Yoav Gelber, *Moledet hadashah: ‘aliyat Yehude merkaz Eropah ve-kelitatam, 1933–1948* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1990), pp. 455–462.

41. See, for instance, Weizmann’s letter to Magnes from September 16, 1933 in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Gabriel Sheffer, vol. 16 (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1978), p. 49.

42. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 60.

43. *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 139. Like Chaim Weizmann, Hartog was a Manchester-trained chemist, an affinity which makes Hartog’s participation in the Survey Committee quite logical. For a summary of Hartog’s work in academic administration, see Mabel Hartog, *P.J. Hartog: A Memoir* (London: Constable, 1949).

44. *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 104.

45. *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 102.

46. *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 104. According to the report, if the Hebrew University were to achieve its unrealized potential as a great institution, it would be necessary to remove “the canker in some of the departments and in the administration itself which . . . at the present moment threatens the University in its very being.” *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 120.

47. *Report of the Survey Committee*, p. 1.

48. Ernst Simon, “Franz Rosenzweig und das jüdische Bildungsproblem,” *Korrespondenzblatt des Vereins zur Gründung und Erhaltung einer Akademie für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (11) 1930: 5.

49. See David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter-History*, revised edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982).

50. See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 102–108.

51. Indeed, it is curious and even counter-intuitive that Jewish nationalist historians, and not merely Zionists (I have in mind Simon Dubnow, as well as Dinur and his Jerusalem colleague, Yitzhak Baer), developed a deep interest in the medieval and early-modern Jewish community as a prototypical nation or state. See Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, pp. 114–115.

52. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*, p. 149.

53. See, for example, Baruch Kimmerling, "Academic History Caught in the Cross-Fire: The Case of Israeli-Jewish Historiography," *History and Memory* 7 (Spring/Summer 1995): 41–65.

54. Scholem, "Mi-tokh hirhurim 'al Hokhmat Yisra'el," in *Hokhmat Yisra'el: hebetim historiyim u-filosfiyim*, edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1979), p. 167.

55. See Shmuel Ettinger, "Heker Toldot Yisra'el ba-dorot ha-aharonim," in *idem*, *Historyah ve-historyonim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992): 44.

Response to George Mosse & David Myers

MARTIN JAY

JOHN MUNRO, THE HISTORIAN OF THE AMERICAN University of Beirut cited by David Myers in his fascinating essay, accused the American missionaries who were its progenitors of succumbing to the dreaded spirit of "Hebraism," which in a footnote he defines as a zealous inflexibility that "was hardly conducive to the establishment of a university in the full humanistic sense of the word." Although there may be little overt irony in the recoil from an alleged Hebraic narrowness in the foundation of a Christian university in Lebanon, it is hard not to feel its far stronger presence in the narratives we have just heard of the origins of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem. For many of its founding fathers, those scholarly colonists from Central Europe who are the heroes of both these essays, were running headlong away from what has for centuries, if not millennia, been stigmatized as the Hebraic alternative to Hellenic culture. True, the language of their new university was to be Hebrew and, as Professor Myers notes, Talmudic and rabbinic literature did find an honored place in the curriculum, which allows him to say that "in the early years . . . the Institute replicated the diaspora rabbinical seminary." But it seems that the center of gravity of their existence ultimately lay elsewhere, in that powerful tradition of *Bildung* and *Wissenschaft*

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that had so captured German Jews in the nineteenth century as a passport to assimilation into the dominant culture of their environment. Their essentially liberal, open-ended interpretation of that tradition may have resisted the transformation of it into the aggressively nationalist, even sometimes racist, variant that characterized what Fritz Ringer has famously called the “decline of the German mandarins.” But it carried with it many of the initial assumptions that *Bildung* even in its most cosmopolitan guise had shared: a fervent faith in the values of harmonized personal culture, aesthetic self-fashioning, and the realization of innate capacities of individual growth. *Bildung*, to quote Ringer, “is epitomized in the neohumanist’s relationship to his classical sources. He does not only come to know them. Rather, the moral and aesthetic examples contained in the classical sources affect him deeply and totally. The whole personality is involved in the act of cognition.”¹

Now, it is to George Mosse along with David Sorkin that we have come to know the costs of the German Jewish embrace of *Bildung* as a means of achieving acceptance back in pre-Holocaust Europe. In Mosse’s *German Jews Beyond Judaism* and Sorkin’s *The Transformation of German Jewry*,² the sad story is told of German Jews who doggedly held on to their cosmopolitan faith in Goethe, Lessing, and Humboldt at a time when gentile Germans were trading theirs in for a much more sinister version of *völkisch* exclusivism. Although neither of these accounts fails to acknowledge the remarkable fruits of that delusion, at least in cultural if not political terms, the essential lesson is a sobering reminder that *Bildung* did little to save German Jewry from the fate of its allegedly less cultured *ostjüdische* brethren.

Interestingly, however, in his compelling account of the ways in which that ideal was displaced to its new setting on Mount Scopus, Mosse provides far less of a sense of any of the costs that it might have entailed there as well. There is, to be sure, no comparable story to be told of blindly holding on to an ideology that was being undermined in the larger cultural environment, no hindsight that tells us that their optimism about acceptance was sadly misplaced. But perhaps there was something lost nonetheless in the triumph of an essentially Hellenic model of learning at a Hebrew university. Perhaps there is, after all, a hidden irony in what David Myers calls their “*mission civilisatrice* . . . to introduce Western standards of academic excellence to the Middle East,” a mission that might have questioned a bit more rigorously which civilization was meant and what standards it was bringing.

Mosse hints at one of the costs when he notes a certain conservatism that has until very recently kept out new approaches in the humanities and social sciences. He also notes a tension between the authoritarian structure of many of the departments of the Hebrew University, which aped the professorial dictatorship so much a part of Humboldt’s university model, and the more open-ended ideal of *Bildung* in its original form. But there is a larger cost that also needs at least raising as a possibility. I am referring to the relative suppression of what can be broadly called the Hebraic as opposed to the Hellenic impulse itself.

These are, to be sure, vexed and imprecise terms, which have probably done as much damage as good in the long history of their usage. To do justice to them would require going at least as far back as Tertullian's angry denunciation of pagan philosophy, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" and would entail a serious confrontation of the work they performed in the lexicons of such later figures as Heinrich Heine and Matthew Arnold, where they functioned sometimes as binary opposites, sometimes as dialectical negations in need of a higher third. There is clearly no time for such an exercise and I'm not sure I'm the scholar to attempt it anyway, but I would like to draw on the admittedly controversial work of one recent student of the opposition, Susan Handelman, to pose some pertinent questions.³

As Handelman argues, it is necessary to liberate Hebraism from the negative aura that has surrounded it ever since it was identified with a hypertrophied sense of sin and guilt leading to a no less exaggerated need for punishing control and obedience to prescribed rules. Hebraism was and is far more than the dogmatic moralism and intolerance for diversity that allowed the historian John Munro, writing as late as 1977, to denounce its influence in the founding of the American University of Beirut. The Central European scholars who chose a Zionist answer to the plight of their people surely knew this, even if they were still beholden to the Hellenic humanist ideal informing the tradition of *Bildung*. But what they perhaps forgot—or at least underplayed—in their zeal to import what Mosse calls "European standards of scholarship and objectivity" was that there was a specifically Jewish tradition (indeed more than one) of relating to texts and the legacies of the past that offered a somewhat different approach.

In his description of the humanities at the Hebrew University, Mosse significantly notes in passing that until very recently, they have been immune to what he calls "changing academic fashions" such as deconstruction or psychohistory. What Susan Handelman has argued in her *Slayers of Moses*, however, is precisely that such apparent fads may themselves be ultimately indebted to certain characteristically Jewish modes of interpretation, rabbinic as well as Kabbalistic. In contrast with Christian traditions, which stressed the incarnation of the divine in the material reality of the world, the Jews understand that "the primary reality was linguistic; true being was a God who *speaks* and creates *texts*, and *imitatio deus* was not silent suffering."⁴ From the point of view of a German notion of *Wissenschaft*, such a fetish of textuality would seem an impediment to research into the objective world outside of us, into the ontological realm that allegedly precedes its textual mediation or representation. To take seriously the word would be to regress to the premodern belief in the legibility of the world as divine text. The personalist model of individual *Bildung* perhaps led in another direction, away from the world into the interiority of the fully cultivated subject. But it too suppressed textuality and the sign systems that were neither part of exterior nature nor of internal subjectivity. Instead, it posited an essentially visual image, a *Bild* of perfection, to be imitated in the search for personal realization.

The Rabbinic traditions of attending to texts led, however, in a very different direction, away from ontology and images into ethics and textuality, away from research and objectivity into commentary and interpretation, away from a concern for the aesthetically self-fashioned cultivated person into an awareness of the dependence of the never fully autonomous self on enabling discursive and intertextual contexts.

These are, to be sure, very gross generalizations, which do not do justice to the complex debts of Rabbinic thought itself to the Hellenistic philosophies of Epicureanism and Stoicism,⁵ and I do not want to leave the impression that they can be used to characterize all of the figures involved in the histories under discussion or all of their work. Nor do I want to be misinterpreted as saying that the Hellenic tradition, however we define it, is intrinsically inferior to the Hebraic, however it may be defined. There is, it must be admitted, a dark side to the Jewish fetish of textuality and commentary, which is captured by the negative connotation sometimes attached to the adjective Talmudic. What I am saying is that the story of cultural colonization and displacement so vividly recounted by our two speakers needs to include an acknowledgment of the ironic implications of the importation of Central European notions of *Bildung* and *Wissenschaft* to Middle Eastern soil. It needs to probe the costs of what has now become known in certain quarters as the “aesthetic ideology,” which accompanied the model of cultivation derived from Goethe and Schiller and its links with certain forms of nationalism.⁶ It may well be, as Matthew Arnold famously said in *Culture and Anarchy*, that “Hebraism . . . has always been severely preoccupied with an awful sense of the impossibility of being at ease in Zion.”⁷ But such a condition was perhaps ultimately even more the case for the Hellenism that Central European Jews, “those cultural hybrids, never fully at home either in Europe or Palestine,” to cite David Myers, brought with them from the diaspora. Or at least so it now seems from a perspective that no longer celebrates the virtues of *Bildung* with the same naive ardor as the Yekkes who brought the word from Berlin—and Athens—to Jerusalem seventy years ago.

NOTES

1. Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 87.

2. George L. Mosse, *German Jews Beyond Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press/Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985) and David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780–1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Both authors, to be sure, value much in the tradition of German-Jewish *Bildung*. Mosse, who strongly identifies with his own background in that tradition, writes that despite their failure in the German context, its defenders “in the long run . . . presented an attractive definition of Jewishness beyond religion and nationalism” (p. 20).

3. Susan A. Handelman, *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

4. Handelman, *Slayers of Moses*, p. 4.

5. I owe this point to my colleague Thomas Rosenmeyer of the Berkeley Classics and Comparative Literature Departments. He also warns against Handelman's overly general characterization of Hellenic thought, especially Aristotle's attitude towards the importance of words, which he did not always subordinate to abstract logic.

6. On the vexed issue of the "aesthetic ideology," a term perhaps best identified with Paul de Man, see my essay "'The Aesthetic Ideology' as Ideology: Or What Does it Mean to Aestheticize Politics?," in *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

7. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 135.

Culture, Religion, and Language in Middle Eastern Universities

J A C O B M. L A N D A U

WHILE THE FOUNDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE Hebrew University of Jerusalem are unique in the cultural history of the Jewish People in Eretz-Israel, they exhibit striking similarities with regard to the development of other institutions of higher education in Turkey and several Arab countries. These universities were not religious institutions transformed into secular ones. Rather, the new secular universities were one of the signs of change of large parts of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states in the years immediately following the First World War.

These secular universities—Jewish, Arab, or Turkish—were vehicles of modernization in large parts of the Middle East, with national habits and traditions. Frequently, these Middle-Eastern universities were foci of nationalist activity, with teachers and students providing both leaders and supporters of patriotic movements. This was expressed most clearly in their emphasis on the cultural heritage—of which the most decisive characteristic may well have been an ardent commitment to the respective national language.

By contrast, religion and tradition in the region prior to the war led to the founding in 1863 of the Protestant Syrian College, while the Collège St. Joseph was established some twelve years later as the Catholic response to the Protestants. In time, these universities became full-grown secular institutions

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of higher learning and research, even though a religious element continued to be present in varying dosages. Neither at any time turned against religion, which maintained its position in the curriculum and in the pervading cultural ambience. This is true, also, of official institutions of higher education in the late Ottoman Empire. In such university-like high schools as the *Mülkiye*, set up in Istanbul in 1859 to prepare civil servants, the School of Medicine and the School of Law, founded there in 1901 and 1912, respectively, religious instruction was also provided. The same held true of the first Ottoman university, Istanbul University, which was established in 1900. Although the curriculum was modern and followed West European models, there seems to have been little, if any, movement away from the traditional Islamic outlook. Much of this applies, also, to the Egyptian University, which was set up in Cairo as a private institution in 1908, and became a state university only in 1925.

While in religious institutions religious-secular tensions were non-existent, for practically all the teachers and students were observant, in secular institutions such tensions were minimal—a situation radically different from the present one. This situation was characteristic of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem as well, during its establishment in 1925 and in the years immediately following. Of course, it was no coincidence that the first academic division set up at the University was the Institute of Judaic Studies. The focus on such traditional branches of study as the Bible, the Talmud, Jewish history, Hebrew literature and language, and similar subjects was not fortuitous. The approach differed from that of the yeshivot, however, where these fields were studied in traditional ways. At the Hebrew University, all these were approached in light of recent scholarly research—linguistic, historical, geographic, and literary. As in other universities in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman Middle East, many of the professors in the Hebrew University's Institute of Judaic Studies were observant. Nonetheless, they all also practiced the critical evaluation of their texts, including the Bible. In this, they differed from most Arab universities, which to the present have been reluctant to approach the study and teaching of the Koran critically. Still, the emphasis on Judaic studies at the Hebrew University, during its formative years, resembled the attitude prevalent in Turkish and Arab universities, during their early years, in their special favoring of the study of the cultural legacy of their respective civilizations. The phenomenon is not uncommon, of course, to universities worldwide, but this focus was even more prominent in the inter-War period, and has continued to prevail to a large extent to our own time.

The very name assumed by the Hebrew University since its inception declared to one and all that its language of instruction would differ from that of other Jewish higher institutions of learning and, naturally, all non-Jewish ones. Hebrew was then not a generally spoken language, and had been little used until revived in Palestine before the First World War. Therefore, it lacked the necessary specialized vocabulary in numerous areas of research and teaching. This had already been demonstrated in 1913, barely a dozen years before the foundation of the Hebrew University, by the Haifa Polytechnic's

insistence on German as the language of instruction. The “language strife” that ensued affected the entire system of Jewish education in Palestine.

The place of Hebrew at the University in Jerusalem was never in doubt. The Jewish National Home in British-mandated Palestine saw the rapid development of Hebrew, warmly supported and encouraged by the Zionist movement. The natural preference of the teachers and researchers for their own respective mother-tongues, however, remained a problem. In the 1930s, in particular, the Jewish professors dismissed from their academic positions in the Third Reich, who emigrated to Palestine and were appointed to the Hebrew University’s staff of scholars, teachers, and librarians, found it difficult to adjust to a new language; they frequently used German among themselves, although increasingly adjusting to Hebrew in their lectures and seminars. The same occurred with Jewish American professors who joined the Hebrew University (and other Israeli universities, newly founded) in the 1950s. By then there was a critical mass of Hebrew speakers and readers in the independent State of Israel, with the special standing of Hebrew no longer in doubt in the entire educational system.

It is interesting to note similar—although not identical—developments in attitudes to language and linguistic practices in both Turkish and Arab universities. For both, the choice of language was a nationalist issue. In the late Ottoman Empire, chiefly in the pre-First World War years, there arose a powerful wave of Turkification, mostly expressed in support for the Turkish language as a unifying imperial factor. Its political leaders, the so-called Young Turks, were struggling doggedly to save the empire from fissiparous tendencies, of which the most obviously dangerous expressions were the breakaway nationalist movements of the various ethnic and religious communities. The introduction of Turkish by-orders-from-above into all schools was carried out in the teeth of opposition from local non-Turk nationalists. In the recently founded university and colleges, Turkish reigned supreme and was used to indoctrinate all students, Turks and otherwise, in Turkish nationalism.

The process continued in the Republic of Turkey, established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923; Turkish was strenuously propagated and imposed throughout the educational system on both Turks and minority groups. This affected the largest of the minority groups, the Kurds, whose language differs substantially from Turkish. Except in the few foreign universities (such as Robert College in Istanbul, later renamed Bogaziçi University), Turkish was the only acceptable language of instruction and research. In the 1930s, when Jewish or Socialist scholars fled the Nazi regime in Germany, many of them obtained academic posts at Turkish universities, especially at Istanbul University, which in 1933 had been remodeled and modernized on the direct instructions of President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself. As with their peers in Jerusalem, the German refugees had to acquire the local language in order to lecture at Istanbul University. Recently, however, Turkey, sure of itself and its own culture, has permitted the setting up of new private universities offering instruction in English

instead of Turkish which, of course, continues to be the language of instruction in public schools and universities. Arab universities also made language central and thus contributed to nationalist activities.

Some Arab universities were established in the inter-War period, in foreign-dominated countries, including the Syrian University in Damascus in 1923, and the University of Cairo (a state university which was a successor to the Egyptian University) in 1925—the year which saw the foundation of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Arabic was enthusiastically promoted in all these universities, both as the language of instruction and as an integral part of the cultural heritage which was feeding Arab nationalism. This occurred despite of—or perhaps because of—their colonial situation: As in the case of the Hebrew University in Mandatory Palestine, all secular Arab universities set up until the Second World War were established and developed under foreign domination. The American University of Beirut, successor to the Protestant Syrian College, and the Collège St. Joseph, both in Ottoman-ruled Syria, have already been mentioned. The Egyptian University was founded in Cairo in 1908, as a private institution, in an area formally a part of the Ottoman Empire and, for all practical purposes, administered by the British. A year later, the University of Algiers was formed by joining together several existing high schools—again, in a region governed by France since 1830.

Following the end of the Second World War and the achievement of independence by a growing number of Arab states, universities mushroomed under practically all these new governments, often with a mass enrollment of students. In this, the situation paralleled that in Israel and Turkey. In the former, two new universities were established in 1955—Tel-Aviv University and Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan (near Tel Aviv), soon followed by Haifa University and, later, by the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, in Be'er Sheva. Several colleges have been set up more recently as well. In Turkey, following Ankara University, numerous others were founded throughout the country, to respond to the rising desire for higher education.

With regard to the language of instruction, however, there are notable differences among Turkey, Israel, and the Arab states. At Turkish universities, as noted earlier, the Turkish language was emphasized not only as the means of instruction but as an important cultural value in itself. In Israel, the situation was identical for Hebrew. Insistence on its use in the entire educational system, including the universities, was an added incentive in urging the waves of new immigrants, after independence, to acquire Hebrew rapidly.

In most Arab states, however, an articulate debate was held in academic circles and among the general public as to the language of instruction in the secular universities (nobody argued with the use of Arabic in the religious educational institutions). To varying degrees, a strong demand arose for Arabization, which meant a comprehensive shift to instruction in Arabic from the foreign languages, generally French or English, which had prevailed in pre-independence years. The difficulties—as with Hebrew and Turkish somewhat

earlier—lay in the need for new textbooks and the development of the required terminology. All this has since been achieved, but not without a struggle. Some noted scholars opposed the change, fearing a lowering of standards, which we now know was successfully averted.

Not surprisingly, the bitterer the struggle for independence, the stronger the demand for Arabization in schools and universities. None of these national liberation movements was bloodier than that in Algeria, which achieved independence only in 1962, after eight years of war. Before independence, French was the prevailing language of instruction in most secondary schools and at the universities, and the educated elites were more at ease in it than in Arabic. Even the leaders of the revolutionary movement, the Front de Libération Nationale, thought and wrote in French. After independence, however, intensive efforts at Arabization were more successful in the school system than at the universities. All institutions of higher education on which information is available as to language of instruction, teach in both Arabic and French, except for three which use French only. Not coincidentally, these three are the University of Science and Technology in Oran, the Institute of Telecommunications, also in Oran, and the Institute of Agronomy in Algiers. The situation is similar in the universities of the neighboring Morocco and Tunisia.

A last issue worth focusing on is the scope and nature of instruction offered by universities in Turkey, Israel, and the Arab states regarding one another's language and culture. Israel's universities are a straightforward case in this respect. One of the first academic units of the new Hebrew University was the Institute of Oriental Studies, later renamed the Institute of Asian and African Studies. Largely structured on German models, it has chairs in Egyptology and Assyriology and others focusing on the modern Middle East. Courses in Arabic and in Islamic culture as well as Ottoman and Turkish studies have been an essential part of the curriculum, bearing in mind the centuries' old Arabic and Ottoman presence in Palestine. Newer Israeli universities have adapted parts of these curricula, benefiting from the presence of many distinguished Orientalists as well as a fair enrollment of students, both Jewish and Arab, in the context of a state where both Hebrew and Arabic are official languages.

The case of Turkey's universities is different. The emphasis placed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his inner circle on Turkism, on the one hand, and Europeanized modernization, on the other, have reduced interest in Arabic and Islamic studies, which have been consigned mostly to small departments in several universities. The only notable exception is the Faculty of Theology at Ankara University, established in 1949, for the organized and supervised study of Islam, which necessarily included study of Arabic language and literature. As for Judaic and Hebraic studies, these are non-existent in Turkish universities. Indeed, when I raised the subject at a meeting of Turkish and Israeli professors at Antalya, in December 1991, the blunt reply was, "What should we introduce these studies for?" The Israeli-Turkish Cultural Agreement, signed a while later, took up the subject again, and now there is a chance

that some Hebrew or Judaic studies may be introduced, on a modest scale, into the program at Ankara University.

Some Arab universities have assigned a small amount of time in the curriculum to Turkish studies, chiefly in the context of Ottoman history in Arab lands (with little interest in Turkish language and literature). All, however have almost entirely ignored Hebraic and Judaic studies. While in Turkey this was apparently due to a lack of interest, in the Arab universities the phenomenon was political, possibly in the expectation that, due to this absence, such studies—together with the State of Israel—would simply vanish. This seems to be the only explanation for the almost total disregard of studies by Israeli scholars in works by Arab writers: such studies are not cited even when obviously drawn on and used.

To be fair, one ought to remark, however, that these attitudes have been slowly changing, at least in some Egyptian universities since the peace treaty with Israel. Although many, probably most, Egyptian intellectuals display a reserved attitude toward Israel, the universities in Cairo are seriously fostering the study of Hebrew and some Judaic studies, chiefly, Hebrew literature and Jewish history. More than a thousand Cairo students are enrolled in Hebrew and Judaic studies courses at their universities. Along with their professors they frequently visit the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, using its library and database. Some of the professors speak Hebrew well and have published works on Judaic topics, including the Genizah.

While it is impractical to attempt to sum up a topic while it is still in flux, there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis that there are growing similarities between the secular universities in Israel, Turkey, and the Arab states. Perhaps this increasing resemblance is part of a global trend that brings intellectual elites closer together. Nevertheless, there are still marked variations between the universities in each single state, not to say between each separate Arab country, Israel, and Turkey. One marked difference lies in the involvement of religious elements within the secular universities themselves, characteristically representing local traditional and political cultures.

In Israel there is hardly any demonstrable religious interference in the study and life of the secular universities. Most religious-minded students attend institutions sponsored and administered by like-minded people. Orthodox students who wish to study at a secular university and still live within a religious ambiance attend Bar-Ilan University, which teaches all subjects through a modern, scholarly approach, but within a religious Jewish atmosphere. In Turkey, while the law explicitly forbids the introduction of Islamic traditions into secular universities, militant Islamic groups still find ways, subtle and otherwise, to attempt to sway students towards an Islamic way of life (in dress, separation of the sexes, fasting during Ramadan, and the like). In several Arab states, chiefly in North Africa, militant Islam is much more in evidence than in Turkey. Time after time, the Islamic associations of students—and the political Muslim circles which support them—articulate extreme demands about the

teaching of Islam in the secular universities. They have repeatedly interrupted classes for prayer and have forced cancellation of movies, theatrical shows, and coeducational excursions. Whether this will lead to a yet greater religious involvement in some of those universities is not clear.

The Beginnings of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

MENAHEM MILSON

THE STORY OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES AT THE Hebrew University can be told in a number of ways: as an account of four generations of ever-expanding and increasingly specialized research; as the history of an important academic institution; and as part of the dramatic story of Jewish scholars who left Europe for Palestine and established the first Hebrew university in history.¹

Arabic and Islamic Studies is one of the academic areas in which the Hebrew University excels, and for which it is justly famous. The institute devoted to this area of study was one of the first components of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: the School of Oriental Studies was founded in 1926, and, in the field of Humanities, was preceded only by the Institute of Jewish Studies, which opened its doors in December 1924.²

The pace of development of Arabic and Islamic studies in Jerusalem can be appreciated if we look at the increase in the number of scholars engaged in study in this field over the years. In 1926 when the School of Oriental Studies was founded it comprised five scholars.³ Today at the Hebrew University 32 scholars are engaged in the study of Arabic language and literature, and Islamic history and civilization.⁴

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That the Hebrew University excels in Arabic and Islamic Studies should come as no surprise. Ever since Arabic and Islamic Studies became part of the program of universities in the nineteenth century, Jews have been among the most prominent in the field. As Bernard Lewis notes, the Jews played a special role in the development of Arabic and Islamic Studies:

During the nineteenth century European scholarship on Islam received a tremendous new impetus. Several new developments contributed to this great growth. One of these was the application to Islamic studies of the critical historical method which was being developed by European and especially German scholars for the study of Greek, Roman, and European history. . . . A second important development was the emancipation of the European Jews and the consequent entry of Jewish scholars into the European universities. From the first, Jewish scholars made a major contribution to the development of Arabic and Islamic studies—a contribution which continues to the present day, as far as politically-minded administrators and benefactors permit. Like their Christian colleagues, most of them had a theological background, transferring from the Rabbinical schools and seminaries where they had studied Hebrew and Talmud to the study of Arabic and Islam. They differed, however, in several important respects from their Christian colleagues. The Jewish scholar, unlike many of his Christian colleagues had no missionary ambitions, no nostalgia for the Crusades, no concern with the Eastern question. He was free from the inherited fears, prejudices and inhibitions that had often marred Christian scholarship.

On the contrary, in two important respects he was favorably inclined to the object of his studies. One of these was practical and real. Hebrew and Arabic are cognate languages; Judaism and Islam are sister religions, with many important resemblances between them. A Jew, particularly a learned Jew, had a head start over his Christian colleagues in the study of Islam, and an immediacy of understanding which they could not easily attain.”⁵

Professor Lewis analyzes this striking phenomenon in greater detail in his earlier article, published in *Judaism* in 1968, “The Pro-Islamic Jews.”⁶ His analysis serves us well when we try to understand the background to the relatively rapid development of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University. Bernard Lewis stresses the importance of the German philological method in the development of Arabic and Islamic studies in Europe—a philological tradition which significantly shaped the character of Arabic and Islamic studies in Jerusalem.

For the founders of the Hebrew University there was yet another incentive for cultivating Arabic and Islamic Studies: the desire to establish bridges of understanding with their Arab neighbors. A closer examination reveals a mixture of motives: on the one hand, lofty ideals of peace and brotherhood—there was even a naive belief that Arabs and Muslims would be deeply moved when they saw Jews immersed in the study of their culture and would in consequence view them with confidence and sympathy—and on the other hand a pragmatic desire to enable young Jews to study the languages of the surrounding countries and become familiar with their society, economy, and culture.

A German, and even more specifically a Berlin connection, was of crucial significance for the establishment of the School of Oriental Studies. When Judah L. Magnes, who would later become the first chancellor of the Hebrew University, was in Berlin from 1900 to 1902, he met a group of young Jewish scholars who were students at the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (better known as the *Hochschule*). "The intellectual and personal ties he formed with a number of like-minded students at the *Hochschule* played a decisive role in shaping his spiritual world. His friends growing up in late nineteenth century Germany had reacted to virulent anti-Semitism on the one hand, and widespread assimilation and Jewish self-estrangement on the other by evincing a new-found ethnic loyalty. Jewish studies became an affirmation of their Jewish identity, the cause of Jewish survival—their vocation, and the cultural renaissance of the Jewish people their special concern. Most were ardent Zionists. Three of them, Arthur Biram, Max Shloessinger, and Gotthold Weil, settled eventually in Palestine."⁷ All three men, in addition to their Jewish studies in the *Hochschule*, were also students of Islam and oriental languages. Each and every one of them had a greater or lesser impact on the development of the School of Oriental Studies. But Magnes's most significant encounter in Berlin was with Josef Horowitz, who was to become one of Europe's leading scholars of Arabic and Islam. In Horowitz Magnes found a man who shared his own views on Jewish-Arab relations. When Magnes became the moving force in the establishment of the Hebrew University, he turned to Horowitz for advice on everything concerning Arabic and Islamic studies, and in 1925, probably at Magnes's suggestion, Horowitz was elected to the University's Board of Governors.⁸

Horowitz was one of the scholars invited to lecture at the inaugural ceremony of the Hebrew University on April 1, 1925.⁹ On his way to Jerusalem Horowitz visited Egypt, where he met with Muslim colleagues and learned first-hand of their bitter opposition to the Balfour Declaration and to Lord Balfour's being invited to the inauguration as guest of honor. While in Jerusalem he reported his impressions to a group of public figures, Arthur Ruppin among others, who, in response, established *Brit Shalom*, which was devoted to promoting Arab-Jewish understanding in Palestine.¹⁰

Josef Horowitz was an Orthodox Jew, the son of the Rabbi of Frankfurt. An accomplished scholar in Arabic and Islamic studies, between 1907 and 1914 he taught in the Anglo-Mohammedan Oriental College in Aligarh in India, and worked for the Indian government as director of the Islamic Inscriptions Department. From 1920 he was Professor of Semitic Languages in Frankfurt. He became one of Europe's best known Orientalists, famous particularly for his critical editions of Arabic historical texts and his research on the Koran.¹¹ It was Horowitz who determined the research program of the School of Oriental Studies when it was established in 1926.

The possibility of making Arabic and Islamic studies a department within the Institute of Jewish Studies had been raised earlier. A letter written in 1925 by Dr. Leo A. Mayer, later to become Professor of Islamic Art at the Hebrew

University, to Professor Max Margolis, at the time Professor of Biblical Studies at the University,¹² indicates that the establishment of a department for Arabic civilization was under discussion in the newly established Institute of Jewish Studies. This proposed department, like the Institute of Jewish Studies itself, was conceived not purely as a research body, but as a department of both research and teaching. The proposed members of the department were Mayer, D. Z. H. Baneth, and Avinoam Yellin.¹³ The idea seems to have been that they would undertake research and other responsibilities in the new department in addition to their existing posts. However, the suggestion of appending Arabic and Islamic studies to the Institute of Jewish Studies was rejected, probably on Horowitz's advice, and a decision was taken to establish a separate institute—the School of Oriental Studies.

A memorandum sent by Horowitz to Magnes upon his return from Jerusalem to Frankfurt contains a proposal for the establishment of an "Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies" and outlines the academic principles upon which the institute should be founded.¹⁴ In this memorandum Horowitz addresses the question of whether Arabic and Islamic studies should be appended to the Institute of Jewish Studies: "The relations between Arabic and Jewish literature and between Judaism and Islam as well as the study of Judeo-Arabic literature—all these fall within the province of the Institute of Jewish Studies," he notes. "However, should Arabic language and literature and Islamic civilization have their place in the University, and not only in the context of their connection to Judaism, then they should not be appended to the Institute of Jewish Studies, rather they should be studied at a separate Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies. This institute, together with the Institute of Jewish Studies, and institutes which would be established later (such as an Institute for the Study of the Ancient East, an Institute for the Study of the Christian East and so forth) could later combine to become a department of Oriental Studies within the Faculty of Arts."

Horowitz's second point is that "only an Arabist trained in Europe or America can be considered for the position of director of the Institute. At present there are no oriental scholars who are fully versed in the methods of modern scholarship." He suggests, however, that Arabic be regarded not only as a classical language, as was the case in European and American universities, but also as a living language with a developing modern literature. To this end he recommends inviting an Arab scholar to join the faculty and suggests employing a "lektor" (that is to say, a native language teacher) but insists that this native Arabic speaker be familiar with European teaching methods. He regards it as desirable to add to the teaching force one or more traditional sheikhs to teach various branches of Islamic theology: *tafsir* (Koranic exegesis); *hadith* (Islamic tradition); and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), but concludes that in the early stages this is not essential. His proposal includes a list of nine Jewish Orientalists, himself included, from among whom the director of the Institute may be selected. He warns, however, that most of them (again including

himself) should not be considered because they would not agree to live in Jerusalem for long periods of time.

In 1926 Magnes appointed Horowitz Visiting Director—which meant, in effect, director in absentia. It may be noted that, unlike the three other research institutes set up in Jerusalem as part of the Hebrew University, it was called in English a school rather than an institute—probably on Horowitz’s initiative, in imitation of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London (in Hebrew the term used was *makhon*). The word Oriental would seem to have been deliberately chosen in accordance with Horowitz’s proposal that the Institute of Islamic and Arabic Studies might in the future combine with other institutes to form a comprehensive oriental department.¹⁵ The school was formally inaugurated on March 15, 1926, with a “one month intensive post-graduate course for a group of some twelve students given by Professor Horowitz on the works of Jahiz and on chapters from the history of Sufism.”¹⁶ The two major research projects which Horowitz initiated in the newly established institute were: a) The concordance of ancient Arabic poetry; and b) The preparation of a critical edition of Baladhuri’s *Ansab al-ashraf*.

A report of the teachers’ meeting held on April 22, 1926, during Horowitz’s stay in Jerusalem is highly instructive. The participants were: Professor Horowitz, Dr. Magnes, Mr. Billig, Dr. Mayer, Dr. Baneth, and Mr. Ginsberg, at the time Registrar of the university, and the meeting began with a session on “Organization and Research Work”: “Mr. Billig will organize the research work to be done by paid and voluntary assistants. Dr. Joel and Mr. Brown were chosen for paid assistantships. Dr. Fischel is another possible candidate (he was not yet examined by Professor Horowitz). Regular reports on the progress of the work will be sent to Professor Horowitz, who will give general directions. The research assistants will work on a Concordance of Classic Arabic Poetry, which work, according to Professor Horowitz, will take at least ten years (it may take twenty to thirty years).” This, as we know, was an over-optimistic estimate.¹⁷ “Professor Horowitz also suggested the publication of a critical edition of the *Ansab al-Ashraf* of Baladhuri, as an interesting piece of work not requiring paid assistants (it might take from two to four years).”¹⁸ This, too, proved to be an over-optimistic forecast. So far, only two and a half of the projected 10 volumes have been published.¹⁹ These two projects reflected Horowitz’s abiding interests: the publication of historical sources and the preparation of a research tool which, he believed, would enable scholars better to understand the Koran.

When Horowitz died in 1931, Gotthold Weil, at the time director of the Oriental department of the State Library in Berlin, replaced him as Professor of Semitic Studies in Frankfurt, and also as Visiting Director. Weil, it should be recalled, was one of Magnes’s Orientalist colleagues from Berlin. However, the development of Arabic and Islamic studies in Jerusalem was really accomplished by scholars in Jerusalem itself.

The first of these was Leo A. Mayer who came to Palestine in 1921 and was appointed director of the Islamic section in the Mandatory government’s

Department of Antiquities. Professor Mayer (1895–1959) came from Galicia and was descended from a long line of Hasidic Rabbis. He attended the universities of Lausanne, Vienna, and Berlin, and received his Ph.D. from Vienna University in 1917. During his years in Vienna he also studied at the Rabbinical Seminary. In 1925 he was appointed lecturer in Muslim art and archeology at the Hebrew University.²⁰ He nonetheless kept his position in the Department of Antiquities until 1933.

Levi Billig, an English Jew, was invited to join the faculty of the School of Oriental Studies in 1926. Billig was born in 1897, and studied Classics at London University (MA, 1920) and Oriental Studies at Trinity College, Cambridge (MA 1925), where E. G. Brown, A. A. Bevan, and R. A. Nicholson were among his teachers. Billig also studied at Jews' College London (1914–16). In 1926 he was appointed lecturer in Arabic Language and Literature at the Hebrew University. He was especially interested in early Shi'ite literature and began work on the edition of an early Shi'ite composition: al-Saffar's *Basa'ir al-darajat*.²¹ Billig was murdered during the Arab Revolt, on August 20, 1936, by an Arab assassin who shot him through the window of his study while he was working on *Basa'ir al-darajat* at his desk.

The other central figure in the founding generation was D. Z. Baneth who arrived in Jerusalem in 1924 and started working in the National and University Library. Baneth (1893–1973) was the son of Professor Eduard Baneth, a famous rabbi and Talmudic scholar who taught at the Berlin *Lehranstalt*. Baneth's major interest was the religious and philosophical literature of medieval Jewish and Muslim thinkers, but his knowledge ranged over all areas of medieval Arabic literature and Semitic philology, which is reflected in the wide variety of courses he taught. However, he published relatively little.²² His extreme shyness and modesty were proverbial. But this reserved and unassuming man was a dedicated and extremely demanding teacher who tolerated no inaccuracy or imprecision. For many years he served as assistant librarian at the National and University Library, refusing to accept an official teaching appointment, and consenting to teach only a few courses as a part-time lecturer. Only in 1937, after Levi Billig's assassination, did he agree to be appointed Lecturer in Arabic Language and Literature.

In 1928 Baneth's cousin, S. D. Goitein, Horowitz's former student, joined the staff of the School of Oriental Studies. He had come to Haifa from Germany in 1923, and taught Bible and Hebrew at Biram's *Real* High School. Goitein soon became the dominant figure at the School of Oriental Studies and later became Israel's most productive and versatile Orientalist. In 1938, Goitein replaced Avinoam Yellin, who was murdered several months previously, as Inspector of Hebrew Schools in the government's Department of Education, an office he held simultaneously with his position at the University, until the end of the British Mandate in 1948.²³ Joseph Joel Rivlin, a native of Jerusalem who in 1927 obtained his doctorate in Frankfurt under Horowitz, joined the staff initially as a research worker on the concordance and in 1929 was

appointed teacher of the preparatory course in Arabic, thus bringing the complement of faculty to five.

As I have already mentioned, the institutes of the Hebrew University were initially founded as research centers. This was Weizmann's decision. The opposing view—that the university should welcome undergraduate students—was strongly supported by the Palestinian members of the university committee. The end result reflected a compromise between the two opposing views: the two institutes in the experimental sciences, chemistry and microbiology, were conceived along the lines decided by Weizmann, that is to say, as institutes devoted exclusively to research. The institutes of the Humanities, which were initiated primarily by the “Palestinians” and Magnes, intended from the start to offer a number of lecture courses, though no decision was taken to confer degrees other than the Ph.D. In 1928 the governing bodies of the university decided to start teaching programs which would lead to an M.A. degree.

The 1930s saw the growth of both the faculty and the student body at the Hebrew University. Two prominent scholars joined the School of Oriental Studies: H. J. Polotsky in 1934 and Gotthold Weil in 1935. Polotsky, a linguist with a wide range of interests, pioneered a new area of study at the Hebrew University: Egyptology; Weil, who was appointed general director of the National Library, was also appointed Professor of Arabic and Turkish philology.

From the start the School of Oriental Studies had to face the problem of how to combine the study of the heritage of Medieval Islam and Classical Arabic on the one hand, and the teaching of practical language skills and contemporary Middle Eastern affairs on the other. The tension this caused is reflected in the Hartog Survey Committee's report on the Hebrew University.²⁴ The authors of the report begin by saying that the School of Oriental Studies “has been and still is very severely criticized by many,” not because of any failure on the part of the staff whom the report praises highly,²⁵ but because the department has “no other object in view than to give the students a picture of Moslem civilization of the past.” Specifically, the report criticizes the undertaking to prepare a Concordance of Ancient Arabic Poetry, “the completion of which will take at least ten years,” and this at a time when “the same University has seen itself forced, on account of lack of funds, not only to suspend work on the Concordance of the Talmud carried on successfully for five years by Rabbi Kassovsky, but also to refuse a subvention to the publication of the Concordance of the Tosefta, of which the first volume has been published, and the rest of which is ready to be issued.” But, the report continues, it would be a “mistake to believe that these critics wish to abolish the School of Oriental Studies. On the contrary, they would like to see it develop and expand, though on a plan different from that conceived by those who were responsible for its establishment.”

Jewish Palestine, they noted, “is surrounded on all sides by the Moslem world, a thorough knowledge of which is of the greatest importance for the economic and political development of the country. For this purpose it is not

the study of pre-Islamic poetry nor the study of old Arab historians that matters, but the study of the living Islamic world. Its geography, dialectology, and commerce are far more important to the Palestinian Jew than Islamic art and archeology. In short, the School of Oriental Studies should be modeled on similar schools in Paris, Berlin, and London, in which the student is made to know the living and not only the dead Orient.

"A graduate of the School of Oriental Studies who does not completely master modern Arabic is in the eyes of the critics a complete failure," the report continues, and goes on to suggest that it might be advisable to engage some native Arabs as teachers for modern Arabic. "These criticisms seem to us to contain a good deal of truth. The School of Oriental Studies was established according to the plan of a man who was an excellent Islamic scholar, and especially wished to develop the Islamic side and, by so doing, to establish the reputation of the University in Arab countries. His plan was accepted by others, who though more interested in the Jewish than the Arab aspect of Oriental studies, also had the idea that the Arabs would look favorably upon the University because of its devotion to Arab studies. It is always dangerous to allow politics to interfere with education. Whatever one may think about the means that might lead to a better understanding between Jew and Arab, so necessary for the building up of Palestine, it is now quite evident that no Arab will change his political views on the Jewish question because of the preparation by the Hebrew University of a Concordance of Ancient Arabic Poetry. We therefore heartily recommend," the Report concludes, "that the School of Oriental Studies should modify its plan of research and study so as to include the study of the Modern Orient. This, however, does not mean that we favor the view of those critics who would completely change the character of this department to the extent of abolishing branches of study now taught there. . . . While we believe that the Hebrew University as an institute for higher learning must engage in studies of the past, we nevertheless insist that we have also to reckon with the present. The School of Oriental Studies should, therefore, begin the kind of practical work that is expected from a school of this kind. A professorship or readership in modern Arabic language and literature and a lectorship in Arabic language should be established. We see no objection to engaging Arab scholars for this purpose." The report's conclusion thus recalls Horowitz's proposal nine years earlier, that Arabic be taught as a living language with a developing modern literature.

In response to these recommendations two significant appointments were made: in 1936 Dr. Alfred Bonne of the Jewish Agency's Institute for Economic Research was invited to teach, as an external teacher, the Economics and Sociology of the Contemporary Near East; and in 1937 Yitzhak Shamosh from Aleppo in Syria was invited to teach Modern Arabic Literature and the skills of Arabic composition and translation. Yitzhak Shamosh was a descendant of a distinguished Aleppo Jewish family. He obtained his law degree in Syria, and was becoming well-known as a journalist and critic when in 1937 he was invited to teach at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For

thirty years Shamosh single-handedly carried out the indispensable task of lecturing in Arabic in the most elegant style on Modern Arabic Literature. He was, to use an Arabic term, a *mukhadram*, that is a person who belongs to two generations: he was simultaneously a member of the teaching staff and a research student preparing his Ph.D. under Baneth. By this time the two main departments within the school were Islamic Culture, and Arabic Language and Literature.²⁶ For a number of years only the former was recognized as a "major subject" for the M.A., but from 1935 onwards, Arabic, too, achieved major subject status. (According to Hebrew University rules at the time, each M.A. student had to take one major subject and two minor subjects.)*

An essential element of any academic institute is the library. The School of Oriental Studies was very fortunate in that it had the nucleus of a valuable oriental library waiting for it even before it was founded. The library of Ignaz Goldziher, containing some 6,000 volumes, was acquired for the Jewish National and University Library, and became the foundation of the oriental collection which was carefully and methodically cultivated by Baneth. The oriental reading room of the university library developed into one of the best of its kind. Today it contains some 30,000 titles—which constitute only about one tenth of the total holdings of the library's Arabic and Islamic collection.

One of the famous methods of Arab historiography is to arrange biographical materials according to generations (*Tabaqat*). In studying the development of Arabic and Islamic studies at the Hebrew University I find the arrangement of materials according to this system most useful and revealing.

The first generation of teachers at the School of Oriental Studies at the Hebrew University—the founding generation—consisted of eight men.** With the exception of Joseph Rivlin, all were born in Europe, and all, with the exception of Levi Billig, were the product of German universities. All, except H. J. Polotsky, had a thorough grounding in Jewish studies. With Billig's untimely death, Arabic and Islamic Studies became the exclusive domain of German-trained scholars.²⁷ Shamosh's arrival did not change the general picture. This generation of scholars determined the character of the depart-

* Courses in the departments included: Islamic Art and Archeology, Mamluk Heraldry, Islamic Coins (Mayer); Introduction to Islamic Historiography, Muhammad and the Jews, the History of Jews in Yemen, Readings in Ibn Qutayba's *Ta'wil mukhtalif al-hadith* (Goitein); History of Arabic Literature, Philosophical Texts (such as Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed, Yehuda Halevy's Kuzari, Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy ibn yaqzan*), Arabic Poetry (*Mu'allaqat*, *Hamasa*, Abbasid poetry) (Baneth). Rivlin taught Koran, Polotsky taught Arabic syntax on the basis of examples from Arab journals and modern Arabic literature. When Shamosh arrived in 1937, his courses on Modern Arabic Literature and Arabic translation and composition were added to the list.

** Joseph Horowitz, b. 1874, Lauenburg, Germany; d. 1931, Frankfurt; Ph.D. 1898, Berlin.

Gotthold Weil, b. 1882, Berlin; d. 1960, Jerusalem; Ph.D. 1905, Berlin.

Joseph Joel Rivlin, b. 1890, Jerusalem; d. 1971, Jerusalem; Ph.D. 1927, Frankfurt.

D. Z. H. Baneth, b. 1893, Krotoschin, Germany; d. 1973, Jerusalem; Ph.D. 1920, Berlin.

Leo A. Mayer, b. 1895, Stanislawow, Galicia; d. 1959, Jerusalem; Ph.D. 1927, Vienna.

Levi Billig, b. 1897, London; d. 1936, Jerusalem; M.A. 1920, London, and 1925, Cambridge.

S. D. Goitein, b. 1900, Burgkundstadt, Germany; d. 1985, Princeton; Ph.D. 1923, Frankfurt.

H. J. Polotsky, b. 1905, Zurich; d. 1991, Jerusalem; Ph.D. 1926, Goettingen.

ments of Arabic and Islamic Studies for many decades to come. Priority was given to extremely careful study of texts and rigorous standards of scholarship.

The second generation begins with the arrival of David Neustadt, who later Hebraized his name to David Ayalon, at the university as a student in the 1932–33 academic year. Ayalon was a graduate of Biram's *Real'i* High School in Haifa, and came to the university to study Hebrew literature as his "major subject" with Jewish history and Arabic as his two minors. He planned to become a high school teacher. Yehezkel Kaufmann,²⁸ who was his teacher in the *Real'i* School, saw him as his successor. Biram advised him to add Arabic to his program of study, as teachers often had to teach more than one subject. We may assume that Biram's motives in giving this advice were not merely practical. It may be recalled that Biram himself had a doctorate in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Berlin, and was known to regard the study of Arabic as an essential element in the teaching of the Humanities in Hebrew high schools, as Latin was in the schools of Europe. In fact the *Real'i* School in Haifa played a special role in preparing candidates for the Department of Arabic at the Hebrew University. Unhappy with Klausner's teaching, after a year or two Ayalon abandoned Hebrew Literature, and made Islamic Culture his major subject.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 the professors at the School of Oriental Studies realized that the time had come to expand the curriculum to meet the needs of the emergent state. Thus Dr. David Ayalon and Dr. Uriel Heyd, who had arrived from Germany as a student in 1934, were invited to establish a new department for the study of the History of the Middle East in Modern Times;²⁹ Ayalon began teaching in the 1949–50 academic year, Heyd two years later. Ayalon and Heyd were the first of the second generation to obtain academic appointments. It is significant that the appearance of a new generation of teachers coincided with the establishment of a new department. Typically both Ayalon and Heyd had worked on Middle Eastern politics before joining the university teaching staff: Ayalon served for a number of years in the Jewish Agency's Department of Political Affairs and the Middle East Division of the Foreign Office; Heyd had also worked for the Jewish Agency, in the same department as Ayalon, and later served as an Israeli diplomat in Washington and Ankara.

Over the course of the next few years other scholars joined the faculty. These included M. J. Kister, E. Ashtor, P. Shin'ar, J. Blau, G. Baer, M. Piamenta, and H. Blanc.* With the exception of Piamenta and Ayalon, all these scholars

* Uriel Heyd, b. 1913, Cologne; d. 1968, Jerusalem; M.A. 1939, Ph.D. 1947, Jerusalem.

David Ayalon, b. 1914, Haifa; MA 1939, Ph.D. 1946, Jerusalem.

M. J. Kister, b. 1914, Mosciska, Poland; M.A. 1949, Ph.D. 1964, Jerusalem.

E. Ashtor, b. 1914, Vienna; d. 1984, Jerusalem; Dr.Phil. 1936, Vienna, Ph.D. 1944, Jerusalem.

P. Shin'ar, b. 1914, Riga; M.A. 1945, Ph.D. 1957, Jerusalem.

J. Blau, b. 1919, Cluj, Romania; M.A. 1942, Ph.D. 1950, Jerusalem.

Gabriel Baer, b. 1919, Berlin; d. 1982, Jerusalem; M.A. 1952, Ph.D. 1957, Jerusalem.

Moshe Piamenta, b. 1921, Jerusalem; M.A. 1947, Ph.D. 1958, Jerusalem.

Haim Blanc, b. 1926, Cernauti, Romania; d. 1984, Jerusalem; BA Harvard 1948, Ph.D. Jerusalem, 1953.

were born and educated in Europe.³⁰ All of them, without exception, obtained their Ph.D. at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, under the supervision of one or another member of the founding generation, and all began teaching in the 1950s. While clearly showing the influence of their teachers they expanded the field of Arabic and Islamic studies at the Hebrew University, and in some cases developed new disciplines or sub-disciplines, such as, for example, the study of Judeo-Arabic, or the study of the transition from the pre-Islamic era to Islam, the study of Ottoman diplomacy, and Mamluk military history.

The teacher-student relations between the first generation and the second are worth examining. Heyd, who became internationally known for his studies on Turkey, and who established a school of Israeli Ottomanists, first studied Turkish under Weil. Between October 1951 and his untimely death in 1968 Uriel Heyd nurtured Ottoman studies at the Hebrew University. Among his pupils were Aryeh Shmuelevitz, Amnon Cohen, Moshe Maoz, Shimon Shamir, David Kushnir, and others, who belong to the third generation of Israel's Orientalists.

Professor Mayer's special interest in the Mamluk era is reflected in different ways in the work of Ayalon and Ashtor. It was Mayer who first directed Ayalon's interest toward the Mamluk era. However, while Mayer's principal interest was the art history of the Mamluk period, Ayalon became concerned with the social structure of the Mamluk state. His students include Moshe Sharon (of the third generation), and Amikam Elad and Reuven Amitai-Preis (who belong to the fourth generation of Israel's Orientalists). As Ashtor's personal interest was in the history of Jewish communities, he chose to focus on the history of the Jews in Syria and Egypt under the Mamluks, and he later wrote a history of Jews in Muslim Spain.

Baneth's influence is ubiquitous, and is to be seen not only in the work of all members of the second generation, but also in the work of many of the third generation who began their university studies in the 1950s: Shaked, Milson, Levine, Lazarus-Yaffe, Moreh, and Friedmann. Of the second generation teachers the one most influenced by Baneth was Blau, who perpetuated and further developed Baneth's special interest in Judeo-Arabic literature. Blau was also influenced by Polotsky, who was the leading figure in linguistics in Jerusalem and was the mentor of both Haim Blanc and Moshe Piamenta. Polotsky, the youngest of the first generation, continued to teach through the 1950s and 1960s—that is to say his influence extends beyond the second and third generations of Hebrew University linguists. Professors Olga Kapeliuk, Gidon Goldenberg, and Arye Levine of the Hebrew University and Professor Shlomo Raz of Tel Aviv University are among the third generation scholars taught by him.

Goitein had many interests, as his list of publications clearly shows. Probably more than any other teacher, he inspired an interest in Islamic history in the students of the 1930s and 1940s. However, there is no one in the second generation of the School of Oriental Studies who could be described as his direct successor. Not one of them regards himself as his pupil in the way that

Blau was Baneth's pupil or Blanc and Piamenta were Polotsky's. This may be due to Goitein's amazing multiplicity of interests, or to his preoccupation with his duties as Chief Education Inspector between 1938 and 1948. His lasting impact in the field of scholarship came in the 1950s when he decided to devote himself exclusively to the study of the Geniza and the social and intellectual history of Jewish communities in the Mediterranean Basin in the Middle Ages, producing the monumental six-volume work, *A Mediterranean Society*.³¹ In 1957 Goitein left Israel to continue his work in the United States, initially in Philadelphia and later at Princeton, where he died in 1985.

Pesah Shin'ar (then Schusser) began his studies at the School of Oriental Studies in 1937 and was soon closely associated with David Ayalon, who recognized his talents and invited him to join the work on Brill's *Modern Arabic Word List*, which was published in 1940. In 1947, after years of research, they produced their Arabic Hebrew dictionary, which has since become the primary tool of Israeli students of Arabic at all levels.

M. J. Kister came to the Hebrew University in 1939. Although he had no previous knowledge of Arabic, he was quickly recognized as possessing most unusual talents. He joined the teaching staff relatively late, in 1959, but his influence on the university began many years before his arrival there as a lecturer. In 1946 Kister began to teach Arabic in Biram's *Realit* School in Haifa and inspired many of his students to continue Arabic and Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental Studies. Kister's influence and charisma were outstanding: Of 19 third-generation Arabists currently teaching at the Hebrew University, six were Kister's pupils at the *Realit* (Lazarus-Yaffe, Yinnon, Shaked, Milson, Friedmann, Sivan). Others found positions in Tel Aviv or Haifa (Winter, Schwarz, Kushnir, Ella Almagor). This is a phenomenon unparalleled in any other area of academic study. Once in Jerusalem Kister developed his special approach to the study of early Islamic tradition; his influence is particularly apparent in the work of fourth-generation scholars E. Kohlberg, E. Landau, and M. Lecker.*

The third generation is that of scholars who began studying at the Hebrew University in the 1950s and joined the faculty in the 1960s—a period of considerable growth and expansion. New subjects and specializations were then introduced and the School of Oriental Studies changed its name to “The Institute of Asian and African Studies” as its scope was extended beyond Arabic and Islamic Studies. The 1960s also saw the establishment of departments of Arabic and Middle East History in the new universities: Haifa, Tel-

* Two important scholars from departments other than Arabic and Islamic History and Civilization should be included in the list of the second generation because they, too, played an important part in training the third generation. The first of the two is the late Professor Shlomo Pines (1908–1990) of the Department of Jewish Philosophy, who was born in Paris, received the Dr.Phil. in Berlin in 1936, and began teaching as a Lecturer at the Hebrew University in 1952), and the other is Professor Jacob Landau (1924–) of the Department of Political Science, whose essay on Middle Eastern Universities is included in this symposium

Aviv, and Bar Ilan whose faculty were also members of the third generation of the School of Oriental Studies.

A fourth—and perhaps even a fifth—generation of academics now teaches Arabic and Islamic studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Two essential qualities of the founders continue to characterize the research and teaching in these departments at the Hebrew University: a deep respect for the written text, which inevitably dictates stringent language requirements; and a complete separation between scholarship and personal political bias.

NOTES

1. I should like to express my gratitude to my colleagues Professors David Ayalon, Joshua Blau, M. J. Kister, and P. Shin'ar for providing me with vital background information about the early years of the School of Oriental Studies and their experiences as students at the Hebrew University.

2. It should be noted that two institutes of experimental sciences (chemistry and microbiology) were established somewhat earlier, in 1923 and 1924.

3. L. A. Mayer, D. Z. H. Baneth, L. Billig, W. J. Fischel, and N. Braun.

4. I am counting here only scholars in full-time tenure-track positions, and in addition there are, of course, research assistants and language teachers, all of whom bring the total number of academic staff up to about fifty. However, the full strength of this group of scholars cannot be appreciated if we do not take into account the Arabists and Islamicists of the Universities of Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beersheva, and Bar-Ilan University, most of whom were trained wholly or partially in Jerusalem, and who maintain close academic contacts with their colleagues in their alma mater.

5. See Bernard Lewis, *Islam in History* (Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1993), pp. 11–12, first published as “The Study of Islam,” *Encounter* (London), January 1972.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 137–51. This article was originally published in *Judaism* 17 (1968): 391–404.

7. Arthur A. Goren, *Dissenter in Zion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 9. Schloessinger: 1877–1944; Weil: 1882–1960; Biram: 1878–1967.

8. See Goren, p. 240.

9. The subject of his lecture was: “The Development of “The Thousand and One Nights.” A Hebrew version is included in the commemorative volume published by the Hebrew University; the English text was published in *Islamic Culture*, Vol. I.

10. “Horowitz reports Egyptian scholars as now definitely hostile. University has political aspect in their eyes now. Only help for this is over a number of years to do useful scholarly work, particularly in language, literature, culture of the east. The Jews the tool of imperialism” (*Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 231–32).

11. He collaborated in Sachau's edition of Ibn Sa'd's *Tabaqat*, editing Vol. II part I (1900) and Vol. III part 2 (1904).

12. Max Leopold Margolis (1866–1932), a noted Semitic and Biblical scholar, was invited by Magnes to serve in 1924–25 as visiting professor at the Institute of Jewish Studies, and was, in fact, the Institute's first professor. He did not, however, settle in Israel, but returned to the US in 1925.

13. Avinoam Yellin, son of David Yellin, was a native of Jerusalem who received his M.A. from Cambridge University in 1923, and was keenly interested in Arabic poetry composed by Jews. He was the chief inspector for Hebrew schools in the Mandatory government's department of education. He was murdered in 1937, in the Arab Revolt. Mayer's letter, written on behalf of himself, Baneth, and Yellin, informs Margolis as a senior member of the Institute of Jewish Studies that Dr. Baneth, a librarian at the National Library, could not participate because of his earlier “literary commitments” to the Academy of Jewish Studies in Berlin, alluding to Baneth's undertaking to translate *The Kuzari* from Arabic to German. Yellin will prepare what he called

Otzar Hashira Hayehudit Bileshon Haaravit (The Treasury of Jewish Poetry in Arabic); Mayer proposes to write a book on Mamluk heraldry, which he did in fact carry out and in 1933 published his well-known work, *Saracenic Heraldry*, a landmark in Islamic art history.

14. H. U. Archive, School of Oriental Studies; letter written in Frankfurt, May 14, 1925.

15. The annual of the Hebrew University for the years 1925–26 (published in Jerusalem, April 1926) describes the operation of the School of Oriental Studies as follows: “The Arabic section of the school began its work on the 15th March 1926. . . .”

16. The list of the 12 participants in the HU archives reveals that the attribute “post graduate” was used in the very widest sense.

17. This ambitious research project is still in progress and the first four volumes are expected to appear this year.

18. According to Goitein, in his introduction to his edition of volume V of *Ansab al-ashraf*, it was Weil who originally suggested this project to Horowitz, and Carl Becker, the famous German Islamicist who discovered the manuscript, warmly agreed. Becker was at the time Minister of Culture in Germany's Weimar Republic.

19. Vol. V, ed. Goitein, appeared in 1936; Vol. IVb, ed. Max Schloessinger, appeared in 1938–40; Vol. IVa, ed. Schloessinger and revised and annotated by M. J. Kister, appeared in 1971; Vol. VIb, ed. Khalil Athamina appeared in 1993. It should be noted that this last volume appeared under the auspices of the Max Schloessinger Memorial Fund which was established at the Hebrew University in 1972, with funds bequeathed by his widow for the support of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Hebrew University.

20. On L. A. Mayer, see H. Z. Hirshberg, “Leon Aryeh Mayer: A Memorial on the 5th Anniversary of His Death,” *Eretz Yisrael*, Vol. 7, pp. 11–16.

21. HU archive, letter from Billig to Kohn, February 8, 1926, written in London.

22. A critical edition of Yehuda ha-Levi's *Kuzari*, on which Baneth worked for some forty years, appeared in 1977, after his death. It was prepared for publication by Haggai Ben-Shammai, a pupil of J. Blau, who had studied under Baneth and who succeeded him as the leading expert on Judeo-Arabic.

23. Goitein's legendary productivity and versatility are attested by the bibliography of his works, which lists 659 items. See Robert Attal, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Professor Shelomo Dov Goitein* (Jerusalem, 1975; Supplement, Jerusalem, 1987).

24. Report of the Survey Committee of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1934. This report, prepared by a committee headed by Sir Philip Hartog, was submitted to Dr. Weizmann, then president of the Hebrew University, and was marked “Private and Confidential, for members of the Board of Governors only.” I should like to thank Dr. Shaul Katz of the Institute of Contemporary Jewry for calling my attention to this report.

25. The report specifically mentions “the high standing in the scholarly world of Professor Mayer,” then Chairman of the School of Oriental Studies.

26. The two other departments were Egyptology and Semitic Linguistics.

27. Professor M. M. Plessner (b. Posen, Germany, in 1900, d. Jerusalem 1973) clearly belongs to the same generation as the founders of the School of Oriental Studies, and shares many of their academic characteristics. However, although he came to Palestine in 1934, he did not start teaching at Hebrew University until 1952, and so had little opportunity to influence the next generation of Hebrew University Orientalists. When he joined the faculty of the School of Oriental Studies in the 1950s his area of specialization—the History of Arabic Science—was added to the curriculum.

28. A Biblical scholar, historian and philosopher, Yehezkel Keufmann was born in 1889 in Dunayevitch in the Ukraine and died in 1963 in Jerusalem. He taught at the *Reali* School in Haifa from 1927 until 1949, and thereafter was professor of Biblical Studies at the Hebrew University.

29. Professor Ayalon recalls that Goitein, at the time director, suggested that the new department be named “The Department for the Study of the Contemporary Middle East.” Ayalon fiercely objected, as he believed that the word “contemporary” could invite a non-academic approach; Goitein had to concur.

30. Baer's case is partly an exception; he came to Palestine in 1933 and studied in the Reali School in Haifa. He wrote his Ph.D. on "Landed Property and Agrarian Reform in Egypt" under A. Bonne.

31. Vol. I, 1967; Vol. II, 1971; Vol. III, 1978; Vol. IV 1983; Vols. V and VI, 1987.

The Zionist Labor Movement and the Hebrew University

ANITA SHAPIRA

IN MAY OF 1949, ONE YEAR AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT of the State of Israel, and shortly after the conclusion of the War of Independence, David Ben-Gurion, then Prime Minister and Defense Minister, appeared at the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University's School of Medicine. Crowned with the recent victory, and at the height of his glory as a leader, Ben-Gurion focused on the dramatic year that had just passed and on the challenges confronting the fledgling state. He ended his words with a declaration that "the sword and the book were handed down to the world intertwined. But the newly redeemed Jewish nation will prove to the world that the book is more powerful than the sword."¹ The press did not miss the maxim; the headline in *Ha'Aretz* read: "Ben-Gurion: The Book Is More Powerful Than the Sword."²

Ben-Gurion's rhetoric in the years immediately following the establishment of the state reverberated with such visionary statements which emphasized the moral and spiritual virtues which should characterize the state: "The Jewish people must behave as befits a chosen people; the State of Israel ought to be a light unto the nations. These virtues grant it the right to exist, and indeed the capacity to exist in a world in which it is one of the youngest and smallest of states." Rhetoric does not necessarily represent reality, but it grants us insight into the terms of Ben-Gurion's thought, as well as the image of the State of Israel which he sought to project. Ben-Gurion was not a follower of "cultural Zionism." To the extent that he concerned himself with matters of the spirit, he preferred Berdyczewski to Ahad Ha'am, Rabbi Akiba to Rabbi Yohanan Ben-Zakkai, Beitar over Yavne. Nevertheless, when it came to sketching the ideal Jewish state, he chose to use slogans and ideas taken from the arsenal of the very school with which he had been at odds his entire life. Ben-Gurion's need to emphasize the state's spiritual values and conceal the power of the

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sword between the pages of the book is part of what Jacob Talmon has called the “touching, distinctly Jewish trait” of respect for spiritual and intellectual matters.³ Veneration of knowledge, the spirit, and intellectual creativity was a characteristic trait of that generation’s leaders. In this sense, Ben-Gurion was part of a well established tradition.

This new approach reserves a distinguished place in the national agenda for institutions dedicated to the dissemination and creation of knowledge, and to the university in particular. Was this indeed the case? How did Ben-Gurion and his Labor Movement colleagues, who had been at the helm of leadership in the *Yishuv*, in the Zionist Movement, and in the state since 1933, perceive the role of the university in the nation-building process? What place did the university hold in their social and national thinking? As in many other cases, ideological conceptions were not always reflected in historical praxis, and it is necessary to examine the actual relations between the Labor Movement and the University, and weigh the factors which influenced them. The two figures I have chosen to examine in this context are Berl Katznelson and David Ben-Gurion. Katznelson had been a member of the Hebrew University’s Board of Trustees since the early 1930s. He had been involved in the fashioning of the Labor Movement’s cultural agenda in Palestine, and in the planning of the university’s policies and organizational structures. For some fifteen years, he served as the link between the Labor Movement and the university’s political and intellectual leadership. Following Katznelson’s death in 1944, Ben-Gurion attempted to fill his shoes, and to maintain his contacts with the intellectual elite. As of 1948, his stature as Prime Minister lent special weight to his views on the university. Their positions in effect reflect the Labor Movement’s attitudes.

Ben-Gurion and Katznelson belonged to a large segment of the Zionist leadership which had not had the benefit of a university education, but had instead gained broad knowledge on their own. Katznelson relates that he had been preparing for the external matriculation examinations in Russia in the hope of pursuing studies in Switzerland, when the 1905 revolution interrupted his plans.⁴ Ben-Gurion left Palestine with Yitzhak Ben-Zvi to study law in Constantinople. He had completed a year of study when the First World War broke out, which led to his expulsion from Turkey as an enemy subject.⁵ A university education was a desire which only a few school boys from the Pale of Settlement actually succeeded in realizing. Only the financially comfortable could devote a number of years of their lives to higher studies: a university education was a status symbol. The positive attitude to the university reflected the reverence for scholarship in the Jewish community on the one hand, and the great thirst for education which was characteristic of this first generation to leave the *heder* for secular culture, on the other hand. These autodidacts read literature, philosophy, history, and the social sciences in quantities and levels of difficulty which would challenge many university professors today. Scientific method, furthermore, was dear to both Ben-Gurion’s and Katznelson’s

hearts. Throughout their entire lives, these two men demonstrated not only a recognition of the importance of an academic education, but also a sincere interest in scholars and scholarship. But the esteem in which knowledge and scholarship were held by the movement's leaders was not necessarily reflected in the university's status in the *Yishuv*.

The university played a somewhat marginal role in the young Zionist Movement and in particular in the Zionist Labor Movement. In European national movements—in Czech nationalism for example—the university played a central role in the revival or creation of a national culture: The language, the national epic, and folklore were all cultivated and nurtured by the university. This was not the case in the Jewish renaissance: The cultural revolution took place outside of academia. The most cardinal phenomenon in this context—the revival of the Hebrew language—had no connection whatsoever to academic bodies. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda's philological innovations, along with the practical work carried out by teachers in the First Aliya colonies, and the Second Aliya laborers' insistence on speaking Hebrew, brought about the dissemination of Hebrew as a spoken language. Scholars of modern Hebrew appeared after the language itself had come into existence, and they made only a marginal contribution to its dissemination.

By contrast, Hebrew literature was of cardinal importance in the shaping of the national movement. *Haskala* literature had preceded the appearance of organized Zionism and played an undoubted role in facilitating its propagation: Ben-Gurion was raised on Mapu's books, and Y. L. Gordon electrified the youth's imagination.⁶ The new Hebrew literature appeared near the end of the nineteenth century, and immediately became a central element of public life. A single Bialik poem is more important to the national revival, Wilkansky stated, than all political brochures.⁷ Brenner was considered to be the voice of the "uprooted," the Jewish intellectual torn between the world of tradition and the modern world, who finds his way in the end to Palestine, where his internal struggles continue. Rachel was the first Labor Movement poet. She gave expression to the Palestinian landscape and the experience of life in a commune. Raised in the Russian cultural tradition, literature was to the members of the Labor Movement the principal cultural medium, providing emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual experiences, educating and shaping their world view and values.

Universities played essentially no role in this fin de siècle cultural revolution. There was no Jewish university, and European universities offered few Jewish graduates an entry visa into European society, which in many cases involved a writ of divorce from Jewish nationalism. The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* attempt to establish a recognized academic discipline, focused on Jewish sources, had borne little fruit from the point of view of nascent Jewish nationalism. Although the *Wissenschaft* approach included some elements of cultural romanticism—Graetz for example—it often turned into a pedantic examination of fine details, which did little to warm one's heart or to inspire

pride or devotion. The university's marginal role in the cultivation of a national culture during the formative years of the Zionist Movement in general and Labor Zionism in particular, stemmed from the fact that the Hebrew University was not a catalyst of the national movement, but was instead a *result* of the movement's emergence. By the time the Hebrew University was established in the mid 1920s, a secular Hebrew cultural infra-structure was already in existence, independent of the academy. This was a fact of major importance in determining the university's place in the local society.

Three principal, interconnected, issues can be discerned in the dialogue between the leaders of the Zionist Labor Movement and the university: The relationship between the manual laborer and the intellectual worker; commitment to national tasks as opposed to an aspiration to an academic career; and the limits of academic freedom within the framework of an ideological national movement.

1. Manual Labor and Intellect

The debate regarding the supposed conflict between the manual laborer and the intellectual worker preceded the establishment of the university by a decade. Already during the first decade of the twentieth century there was a debate in the Zionist press regarding the establishment of a Hebrew university in Palestine. The central argument against its establishment was that the Jewish people was marked by an excessive tendency to spirituality, and what was needed for its revival was not yet another institution to distance its youth from manual labor. Manual labor was considered essential not only as a means of providing livelihood for the untrained Jewish newcomers, and not only to guarantee Jewish settlement of the land or to provide moral legitimacy to this settlement process. Rather, manual labor was seen as a regenerative process whose task was to change the Jew's essential nature: to transform the alienated city dweller, typically a middleman, into a productive individual, living off the fruits of his own labor. It was intended to bring him closer to nature, to the soil, to primordial forces. This was to be the moral revolution which would accompany the national revolution: The new Jew would arise from his immediate contact with the land of Palestine. He would signify the end of the dichotomy between matter and spirit, the personal and the national.

The high priest of physical labor was A. D. Gordon. One might have expected, therefore, that he join the opponents of the university, as an institution which would reinforce the contradiction between manual laborer and intellectual, and which would legitimize Jewish youth's avoidance of manual labor. But Gordon's position was in fact more complex: The Jew, for whom the life of the spirit is central, he claimed, can not be expected to strip himself of his spiritual assets and to engage in manual labor alone. Must the idea of Jewish labor, he asked, involve the cultivation of a generation of ignoramuses? "So long as we hold on to the banal view that labor and learning

are in conflict,” wrote Gordon, “that one who works cannot have higher education and one who learns cannot work.” The entire “idea of labor becomes meaningless. What value is there in an idea which does not permit the spirit to ascend, but instead forces it to descend!”⁸

The model Gordon sought to cultivate was what Berl Katznelson termed “the Volozin Yeshiva in modern garb.”⁹ He wanted *torah lishma*—knowledge for its own sake, as had been the practice among the great Jewish scholars in the past, who had made their living by manual labor, and for whom study of Torah was not “a means to an end or a symbol of status.”¹⁰ Gordon, Katznelson, and their associates were unwilling to relinquish the aspiration for knowledge and learning, which was so meaningful to their generation. Katznelson, moreover, was haunted by a sense of loss; he felt that the Zionist Movement was poor in spiritual resources, since many of the Jewish people’s greatest intellects had chosen to devote their talents to general culture. He therefore sought to provide learning for all, disregarding the concern that this might lead them away from physical labor.¹¹ He was therefore not opposed to the idea of the university and hoped instead that an idealistic education would create a type of individual who would seek knowledge but would continue to consider simple labor his destiny. Such utopian expectations could be heard from Katznelson only until the early 1920s. The older Katznelson, in the 1930s and 1940s, was much more down to earth, and no longer deluded himself as to intellectuals’ willingness to forego their careers and become manual laborers. And Gordon’s extremely idealistic demand was replaced by a more moderate one, that the intellectual acknowledge his commitment to society. This was a de facto renunciation of the demand for physical labor. The idea that formal education must be renounced for the sake of life on the kibbutz was accepted only by very few in the 1940s. These were members of the youth movements who avoided the matriculation examinations so that they would not face the temptation of a higher education. The laboring intellectual was an ideal fulfilled by some Fifth Aliya groups from Germany who accepted Gordon’s ideal and turned it into the foundation of their new life in Palestine, for example, the settlers of K’far Sh’maryahu, Ramot ha-Shavim, and other settlements. The movement as a whole, however, did not stand up to this trial by labor.

Ben-Gurion shared Gordon’s and Katznelson’s premise regarding the importance of physical labor, with special emphasis on agriculture. He barely touched on this question during the pre-state years, but devoted considerable time to it following the establishment of the state. The very first Defense Service Statute, which established the Israel Defense Forces, explicitly states that every soldier must spend a year working in agriculture. The ideology at the base of this law was rooted in the Gordonian conception that agricultural labor is the best training for shaping a youth’s personality and for his proper re-education. This statute, however, was never actually implemented, because life and reality were stronger than the law. At the same time, Ben-Gurion attributed great importance to the expansion of the scientific

infrastructure. The War of Independence had taught him the major role of science in the development of arms. He considered science to be the means for a long-term guarantee of Israel's qualitative edge over its much larger and more populous neighbors. Education and knowledge, then, were no longer luxuries, but principal vehicles in the struggle for survival. Nevertheless, Ben-Gurion remained true to his basic conception, and continued to emphasize the need for a blend of manual and intellectual labor, in a collaboration between the intelligentsia and the people.

In the summer of 1962 he in fact coined a new phrase: "an academic working people." This was an updated version of the 1930s slogan "a working people," which had replaced the "working class." The addition of "academic" was meant to underline the task which Ben-Gurion assigned the next two decades: higher education for all. "A university education for every young man and woman is not utopian," he declared. "It is an essential requirement for the people of Israel." The need to bring about a general improvement in the level of education, and the attempt to recruit the intelligentsia to the urgent national tasks form the background to his initiative. In the new world of the 1960s, scientific and technological ability fulfilled the national function that agriculture had filled in the beginning of the century: it is their task to guarantee the Zionist hold on the land. Ideas tend to die slowly: Ben-Gurion did not renounce the slogans of his youth, but instead infused them with new meanings. A year later, at the laying of the corner-stone of the college at Sede Boker, Ben-Gurion responded to his colleagues in the movement who protested his desire to provide an academic degree to all young men and women. "Who will work? they ask me." The issue, rather, he declared is that "the problem of our generation is [how to achieve] a blend of labor and science." Like Katznelson and Gordon half a century earlier, his hopes were pinned on the idealism of volunteers, who would come to Sede Boker for a life of labor and scientific research. "You might think I'm crazy," he said, "but I believe that the ideal of blending labor and science will be realized here." And in a final reprise of turn of the century ideology, he stated that "a person who does not engage in physical labor is in danger of degeneration."¹²

2. National Commitment and Academic Careers

The university had not grown from the Yishuv's own needs and structures, but had been established by donors from abroad, and was in fact run by them until the mid 1930s. The sense of alienation between the "Mountain"—Mount Scopus—and the "Valley"—the Jezreel Valley—was based not only on differing political positions, but on an acute intuitive sense that the university as an institution, and the faculty as individuals, were not motivated by an unswerving loyalty to the Zionist cause, or to the Yishuv and its interests in their broadest sense. Berl Katznelson called this missing motivation a "pioneering spirit"; we call it "commitment." Katznelson and his colleagues were fully aware of

Palestine's limitations as a distant corner on the margins of world cultural developments. They were well aware of the provincial nature of *Yishuv* society, vis-à-vis the magnetic attraction of the wide world. Their demand for absolute commitment implied that despite all of this, the participants in this enterprise consider it the Jewish people's most important endeavor, and be willing to devote their lives to it. For its sake they renounced their attachment and longing for the broader cultural pastures outside of Palestine, including the best of European culture, the socialist vision being implemented in the Soviet Union, or even the longing for one's parental home. This was the stance taken by much of the intelligentsia affiliated with the Labor Movement.

Not so in academia. The university and its faculty isolated themselves within a world of their own, in which the reality of the *Yishuv* did not play a dominant role in the setting of priorities, or in the shaping of a cultural-ideational system.¹³ The choice between development of an internationally recognized academic career and devotion to the needs of Palestine had important implications on both the personal and the institutional levels: On the personal level, a scholar motivated by the desire to publish an article in a foreign language journal in order to gain a reputation outside of Palestine was responding to needs which were not those of the society in which he lived: "There is nothing more tragic than the situation of a scholar in Palestine," Katznelson stated. "He creates in an atmosphere which is without echo, with no public response."¹⁴ This alienation—the distance between the scholar and the society of the *Yishuv*—derived from the fact that "science which does not serve society and the people may be an important thing in itself. But one cannot claim it is of importance to us. One cannot expect us to appreciate and admire it, if it is alien to our own enterprise."¹⁵ Accordingly, he who chose international acclaim chose estrangement from the society in which he lived.

On the institutional level, the question was related to the university's priorities and to the question whether the Hebrew University ought to be an exact copy of similar institutions abroad—a "cosmopolitan university" as Katznelson called it—or a Palestinian university, adapting itself to the country's specific needs. Katznelson mocked Magnes' slogan "not like all nations." The very same persons, he said, who have inscribed this formula on their banner with regard to Palestinian politics, adopted the opposite formula "like all the nations" when it comes to the establishment of the university, in their insistence upon copying the European model into Palestine. Katznelson sought an original Palestinian university, which would take local needs into consideration when choosing fields of research and teaching. He lobbied for the establishment of a department of pedagogy and education, but was disappointed with the results once this occurred, since the school of education was again an exact copy of the customary model, lacking any original features.¹⁶ He considered the establishment of a school of agriculture to be of prime importance. On this matter he clashed with Weizmann and others, who wanted first to guarantee a high level of theoretical studies.¹⁷ He strove to

establish a chair in Jewish history from the biblical era on, with particular emphasis on the modern period, from the days of the early *Haskala* and emancipation through the history of the national movement. He demanded the establishment of an institute for Middle Eastern Studies, and attributed great importance to an acquaintance with Arab and Islamic culture. He advocated a faculty of social sciences, which would train civil servants for the nascent Jewish public service. In his last years, he demanded that a school of medicine be established in Jerusalem, since the great reservoir of Jewish doctors in the Diaspora had been destroyed in the Holocaust.

Katznelson's attempt to persuade the Hebrew University to adapt itself to Israeli realities yielded limited fruit, and proved a source of constant frustration: "I do not know of a single institution in Palestine," he complained, "in which it is as difficult to repair something as it is in the university."¹⁸ He did not give up, however, and continued to do battle against "the excessive academicism which rules in Jerusalem more than it does in ancient universities."¹⁹ In the wake of the Holocaust, the university gained importance as the source of a new Jewish intelligentsia and science. Hence, the question of commitment by the university and its teachers to what was deemed by Labor leaders to be national needs, and the awareness of the university elite's alienation from the budding Israeli society, both gained increasing significance.

Katznelson's dissatisfaction with the university and its personalities reflected a widely held sense of alienation between the Labor Movement and the Jerusalem intelligentsia. A number of factors contributed to this sense: First, the Yishuv's political and cultural character had been set primarily by immigrants from Eastern Europe. The university, on the other hand, had been largely shaped by heirs to the German cultural milieu, and to a certain extent by disciples of an Anglo-Saxon culture. Estrangement between the *ost-Juden* and the university leadership reflected cultural, temperamental, and political differences. Furthermore, the university's central figures, and many of its founders, were among the prominent members of *Brit-Shalom*, and later of *Ihud*: Hugo Bergman, Akiba Ernst Simon, Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, Shmuel Sambursky, Judah L. Magnes. The "Ahad Ha'amist" approach to Palestine as a spiritual center was predominant in Jerusalem. In later years, this circle's support for bi-nationalism—its opposition to the Biltmore Plan and to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, reinforced the Labor Movement's sense that the "Mountain" and the "valley" constituted two separate camps.²⁰

Political differences, however, were but one aspect of the conflict between the Jerusalem intelligentsia and the Labor Movement. Despite their reverence for scholars, the socialists had no feelings of inferiority vis-à-vis the professors: The cultural condescension of A. E. Simon, who cautioned Katznelson against the declining level of articles in *Davar*, the *Histadrut* paper, which Berl edited, led to the editor's rebuttal, which succinctly summarized the relations between the two elites: "Many of the intelligentsia fail to join us," he wrote to Simon. "The majority of them, due to their complete aloofness from

the workers and their aspirations, the minority of them because they differ with us on a number of points, and some of them due to prejudice.”²¹ From the point of view of the “valley,” the center of life and creativity in Palestine was to be found in the creation of an infrastructure in Palestine, in innovative social experiments, in the transformation of Palestine into the center of Hebrew culture. The complacency of the university’s rector, Professor Leon Roth in 1943, who stated that the university should be “a guide to the perplexed of Palestine,”²² sounded arrogant and out of place to Katznelson and his colleagues: Mount Scopus was not pivotal to Jewish life in Palestine, and national creativity would not issue forth from this exclusive institution, which refused to change and was outwardly, rather than inwardly, oriented. The question phrased by Isaiah Leibowitz (as quoted by Katznelson), “to what extent does the university as a representative spiritual institution . . . actually represent the *Yishuv*?”²³ was given a negative answer by Katznelson and his associates.

3. Academic Freedom in a Collectivist Society

The Yishuv and the State of Israel were pluralistic societies. The Yishuv was a voluntary society, with a number of sources of authority and power, which fed off each other. The young State of Israel was a democracy, in which the political opposition had a substantial amount of power, and in which the press attacked the government mercilessly. Therefore, an attack on academic freedom, in the sense of a demand for loyalty to a particular creed or political line, was never a real option. This must be borne in mind when we come to compare early Israeli society with various “guided democracies” and with the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, the state’s founders were motivated by a powerful sense of mission, and by a desire to design not only the political and social framework of the Jewish entity in Palestine, but also to mold its ethos and comprehensive world-view, according to their own ideology.

But there is a difference between ideology and political positions. While Ben-Gurion and Katznelson demanded loyalty to Zionist ideology, they did not intervene in matters pertaining to day-to-day political perspectives: they rejected any necessary relation between politics and a scientist’s scholarly work. Ben-Gurion stated this bluntly at the annual meeting of the Friends of the Hebrew University in 1937: “A scientific institution must be free of political tendencies,” he said, “Science which is touched by a political tendency must be rejected. . . . But the lack of a political tendency does not mean a lack of any political mission, or a national mission to be more precise. Without such a mission, the university becomes an empty body.”²⁴

Science must be guided by the desire to uncover truth, Ben-Gurion said, because “knowledge of the truth regarding nature and the universe, peoples and society, past and present, is a powerful and necessary tool in all our activities.” But, he continued, Jewish research can be free of apologetic inclinations only if it takes place in an independent Jewish society living in its

own land. Thus, Ben-Gurion formulated his conclusion in one of those dialectical phrases he liked to coin: "The redemption of Jewish science cannot occur without the redemption of the Jewish homeland, and the redemption of the Jewish homeland cannot occur without the redemption of science."²⁵

Katznelson's phrasing was a little more subtle. "We must learn to distinguish between great principles of faith and between their outward shells" he said. "One must not reject cultural activity due simply to the fact that it is guided by a credo."²⁶ Katznelson preached tirelessly against the dogmatic teachings of Marxist education in the left wing of the Kibbutz movement: the *Kibbutz ha-Artzi* and *Ha-Shomer ha-Tza'ir*, and even in *Ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uhad*, notably in his famous article "In Praise of Confusion and Against White-Wash." But Katznelson was sensitive enough to know that he and his colleagues were not free of ideology either and were not objective bystanders. He deemed education guided by values—as against neutral education—to be a desirable element in the moral formation of young men and women. The question was what values. "Our opposition to beliefs which seem to us spurious should not lead us into opposing the very presence in education of belief itself—in Zionism, in socialism, in humanism in science or in religion."²⁷

Hugo Bergman's candidacy for University Rector in November 1935 led Katznelson to distinguish between the scholar's right to hold political views and his right to independent scholarship—and the university's commitment to the national perspective. Since the 1920s, Katznelson and Bergman had engaged in a friendly dialogue on the Arab question. After the 1929 riots, both men's views became polarized: Katznelson was convinced that the times demanded vigorous defense of the Yishuv and of Zionism in the face of the political campaign being waged against them, while—for the very same reasons—Bergman decided it was time to relinquish the demand for a Jewish majority in Palestine—a position which removed him from the Zionist consensus. Nevertheless, when he was once again attacked by the right in 1934, *Davar* set out to defend him. However, when Bergman was presented as a candidate for rector of the university, Katznelson expressed his opposition. In a letter to Bergman, which seems not to have been sent, he clarified his position: "To the extent I have been able, I have defended the university's academic freedom with all my might, and I have voted in favor of acceptance of professors whose political views are very different from my own. But I make a distinction between study and research [on the one hand] and posts which constitute public and national representation [on the other hand]."²⁸ What is permissible on the private, individual, level is not permissible on the public level. Similarly, in his 1937 speech, Ben-Gurion elucidated the problems surrounding the university's national obligation and its commitment to the Zionist perspective: "This young institution, which is necessarily nourished primarily by scholarly energies which come from the outside, is in danger of becoming uprooted and estranged, if not alienated. It is incumbent upon the *Yishuv* more than upon any other body, to root the university in the homeland, in the *Yishuv*'s desires and historical missions."²⁹

The principal means by which Katznelson and Ben-Gurion sought to guarantee the university's loyalty to the Zionist cause was democratization. Up until 1935, the university was governed by the Chancellor, Judah Leib Magnes, who imprinted it with his Ahad-Ha'amist and pacifist views. At the ninth session of the university's Board of Trustees, in which Katznelson played an active role, it was decided to eliminate the position of chancellor. Magnes was elected President instead. In addition to the Board of Trustees, which convened biennially in Europe, and whose membership was entirely uninvolved in the life of the *Yishuv*, an Executive Committee was established, seated in Jerusalem, and which convened every other week. The result was to transfer the university's center of power from the Diaspora to Palestine. At the same time, a revolutionary reorganization of the university's internal structure was effected: It was decided that the Deans and Rector would from here on be elected by the university's faculty. Katznelson defined it as the "implementation of the principle of elections in all areas of academic administration."³⁰ He expected that when authority in the university was transferred from the foreign based academic oligarchy into broader-based circles of policy-makers, and when, furthermore, Palestinian-educated membership within this circle grew—the university's character would eventually change.

For the very same reasons, Katznelson and Ben-Gurion attempted to involve Zionist bodies—the Jewish Agency Executive and the *Histadrut*—in financial and administrative responsibility for the university. The intention was to liberate the university from excessive dependence upon foreign donors, and to direct it toward subjects of interest to the national movement.³¹ As part of the attempt to conquer the university from within, an attempt was made to establish an organization of *Histadrut* members in the university. The 1930s and early 1940s were witness to an exceptional phenomenon whereby the left had minimal influence upon the Hebrew University student body, as against an overwhelming predominance of the right. Katznelson hoped to have the *Histadrut* operate among the students as well. It seems, however, that little change occurred on this front until young men of a Labor Zionist affiliation made a significant appearance within the student body—something which happened only after the War of Independence.

In general, though there was much that was similar in Ben-Gurion's and Katznelson's attitudes toward the university, there were significant differences. At the functional level, science was to assist in the upbuilding of the land: study and research of the land of Palestine, its water, climate, and minerals, would facilitate dense Jewish population of the land. This was the reason why they called for the development of agricultural sciences, for instance. After the establishment of the state, Ben-Gurion emphasized the importance of science and technology within the framework of Israel's security, and in the development of armaments. They were also important in facilitating the absorption of mass immigration.³² Thus practical considerations were never absent from their thinking. The recruitment of top

scientists to advance current national needs was considered legitimate not only in the Soviet Union—the “mobilized society” to which they compared themselves—but in the West as well: Cambridge and Oxford professors had been recruited to the war effort during the Second World War, and American scientists had volunteered for the Manhattan Project in the United States. These were the models which served Katznelson and Ben-Gurion when they demanded that the university put itself in the service of the national interest.³³ But Ben-Gurion emphasized the functional aspect of scientific development more than Katznelson, and was more interested than Katznelson in the applied sciences.

The ideological stratum was more complex: They both spoke of the need to form a national ethos and to mold the nation’s image. The educational program Ben-Gurion promoted spoke of “study of the homeland” and “study of the nation” as the two pillars of Israeli education. But when he described the details, it turned out that he intended to base study of the nation, not to mention study of the homeland, entirely on the Bible.³⁴ In a fascinating letter to Nathan Rotenstreich written in the late 1950s, Ben-Gurion declared his psychological and spiritual affinity (and that of the youth in Israel) to the Biblical past, as opposed to the exilic past. He presented Zionism as a spatial and temporal leap over Jewish history. The state, to him, was a new beginning “which blends in immediately with the distant past; with the past of Joshua Bin-Nun, David, Uziah, and the first Hasmoneans.” It is by no means a continuation of Jewish existence in the Diaspora.³⁵ By the same token, he referred to the entire cultural heritage of the Jewish people in exile as an imitative culture, as opposed to one created by the people in its own land. The latter constituted an “original culture.”³⁶

Katznelson, on the other hand, never subscribed to Ben-Gurion’s view regarding the Jewish Diaspora and the so-called “historical leap.” He believed deeply in a conception of Jewish historical continuity, attributing great importance to Jewish life and creativity in the Diaspora, and wishing to root the incipient national culture in Jewish history through all its epochs. This view linked him to the faculty who, as disciples of Ahad Ha’am, were committed to a similar conception. Katznelson himself was far from being an admirer of Ahad Ha’am, but on the cultural front, he was quite close to his views. Moreover, Katznelson understood national culture as a totality, viewing the cultural sphere as a single domain which calls for a comprehensive attitude. His thinking avoided Ben-Gurion’s implicit classification of matters important to the national spirit and matters which were of no consequence to it. He therefore placed greater importance upon the academy’s affinity for the national perspective as against Ben-Gurion’s relative indifference. Katznelson was sophisticated enough to understand the dangers inherent in his attempt to impose Labor-Zionist concepts on the university, but thought it more dangerous to allow the growth of an academic island detached from local values and local reality. In a society in which commitment is a supreme value, there is no

such thing as a neutral education. For this reason, by the way, he was also much more reticent than Ben-Gurion in his use of the word "truth" insofar as it pertains to science and scholarship.

One of the surprising things in this dialogue is the extent of mutual involvement, not on the institutional but on the personal level. Both the politicians and the academics considered the dialogue necessary, and undertook it willingly. This is not surprising insofar as Katznelson was concerned, since he was a man whose intellectual interests found much common ground with his partners in this dialogue. His conversations with Hugo Bergman, Gershom Scholem, Ben-Zion Dinaburg, and Dov Sadan were part of his ongoing discussion with the entire cultural elite of Palestine. Ben-Gurion, on the other hand, was hardly involved in the life of the intellect in Palestine. Nevertheless, the opinions of the professors were important to him. It is my impression, in fact, that he cared more for the opinions of the professors than Katznelson did.

Of equal interest is the willingness and seriousness with which the professors treated their relations with the politicians. The pitfalls of this special relationship came into focus in the two meetings Ben-Gurion held in 1949 with a number of intellectuals, who he hoped might advise him on how to shape the nation's image in the wake of the War of Independence and in the face of mass immigration.³⁷ The list of those invited to these meetings indicates that the university was considered neither the sole source of inspiration and historical insight, nor indeed the predominant one. Ultimately, the meetings served to underline the university's marginality in the young state's cultural life. Only three professors participated: Martin Buber, Hugo Bergman, and Ben-Zion Dinaburg, as opposed to thirty non-academic intellectuals, most of whom were writers, poets, and journalists. The meetings demonstrated the distance between Ben-Gurion and the academic world. He wanted concrete answers to the problems he faced in shaping the image of mass immigration. Instead, Buber confronted him with philosophical questions such as "to what end?"—To what end had the state been established? Buber wanted the state to be guided not by *raison d'état*, but by moral principles. In this context, he raised the question of the Arab refugees for discussion. Bergman also raised theoretical questions related to such issues as what Judaism is, and what a Jewish state should be. He cautioned against trends which seemed to be moving toward a chauvinistic self-segregation, which had been given expression in the removal of English-language signs by some of the youth. At a later stage in the discussion, Buber spoke of his fears of the immigration of masses lacking in a value-centered education, which may swallow up the idealistic minority in the country (the "cream" as he called them).

They were listened to intently, and Buber's questions became the focus of the discussion. But intellectual and emotional light years separated them and the other participants. When the soldier-poet Chaim Guri spoke of a "spiritual brain trust, closed to a large extent to the gushes of wind which bring with them

dust and storm,”³⁸ he gave expression to the feeling of separation between the “Jerusalemites” as they were called in the discussion, and the younger generation, which had just borne the brunt of the war. The fact that the participants’ gaze was turned toward universal problems at the expense of concrete matters, raised the discussion from an intellectual point of view, but also made it sterile.

Ben-Gurion’s purpose in holding these meetings is unclear. It is doubtful whether Ben-Gurion truly believed that Torah would issue from Mount Scopus and the word of God from the university in Jerusalem. At a preparatory meeting with writers in Alterman’s home, Ben-Gurion declared that the Defense Ministry was the Ministry of Culture.³⁹ It was his view that the military was the natural place for the crystallization of the nation. One must assume that he held these meetings either because he believed that this is how the “philosopher-king” must act, or that this is how Berl Katznelson would have acted. It is also possible that the same psychological and cultural factors which led him to adopt the slogan regarding the book’s preference over the sword, and Israel as “a light unto the nations,” were also responsible for his initiating these meetings. Whatever the case may be, these summit-meetings only served to highlight the university’s marginality in the young Israeli society, which had undergone a profound trauma and was in the midst of rapid change. The university did not play an active role in the determination of the public agenda, or in the intellectual ferment which followed in the wake of statehood and the crisis of war.

The university, in Ben-Gurion’s and Katznelson’s thinking, was expected essentially to do three things: to provide high-level scientific know-how and the professionals required by a modern state; to constitute a primary source for national culture; and to serve as a workshop for the apprenticeship of the cultural elite. The first was the easiest to fulfill. Important reforms in the university’s structure were introduced after the World War, and the disciplines which Katznelson had considered to be of vital importance did indeed become an integral part of the university. The demand for professional service to the state was also fulfilled. As to the university’s impact on national culture—it seems doubtful whether this expectation was indeed fulfilled. Increasing specialization led to an increasing distance between the suppliers and the consumers of knowledge. To this day, the target audience for most university professors is not the Israeli public, but rather their foreign peers. Academic knowledge makes its way to the broad Israeli public only slowly and only to a very limited degree. At the same time, however, ever since the 1960s, the universities do serve to a great extent as catalysts in public debate regarding the character of Israeli society and the nature of the existing and desirable political culture and relations with the Arabs. Insofar as the corpus of Hebrew culture was concerned, then, the university failed to become a primary source of creativity. Insofar as the shaping of a national ethos was concerned, however, the university’s status changed considerably

from what it was before the establishment of the state and in the first decade of its existence.

There is a direct correlation between the decline of the Labor Movement and the rise of the university. With the decline of the earlier sources of inspiration of social and cultural values associated with the Labor Movement—such as the kibbutz movement, the founding fathers of the Labor Movement, and the circle of writers and poets linked to the Labor Movement—the university's intellectuals made their way into the vacuum and began to play a key role in the crystallization of a secular and humanist national ethos. In this sense, the Hebrew university did indeed create a cultural elite which came to serve as one of the models for Israeli intellectual life and the critique of Israeli society. Is this what Katznelson had in mind when he called for the academy's commitment to the Zionist enterprise, or would he have resented current trends? It seems to me that he would have been more pleased with Israeli academics' caring though critical involvement in Israeli society today than he was with the indifferent ivory tower on Mount Scopus in his own day.

NOTES

1. David Ben-Gurion, *Hazon va-Derech (Vision and Pathways)*, I (Israel 1951), p. 148.
2. *Ha'Aretz*, May 18, 1949.
3. Jacob Talmon, "Medinat ha-Yehudim' shel Herzl mi-Ketz 70 Shana" ("Herzl's 'Jewish State' Seventy Years Later"), in *Be-Idan ha-Alimut (The Age of Violence)* (Tel-Aviv, 1974), p. 164. "I can recall many embarrassing meetings with famous Jewish leaders," wrote Talmon, "who have not only gained a place in history, but have made a name for themselves in the world, and yet they lament the fact that they had not become professors, writers, or thinkers. They cannot forgive themselves for this, and they are filled with envy at the sight of intellectual mediocrity which does not reach even half their stature."
4. Berl Katznelson, "Darki la-Aretz" ("My Way to Palestine"), in *Ktavim* (Writings), Vol. V (Israel: Mapai Publishing, 1953), p. 311.
5. David Ben-Gurion, *Zichronot* (Memoirs), Vol. I (Tel-Aviv, 1971), pp. 52–72.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
7. A. Zioni (Wilkansky), "Mehapsei Hechsherim" ("In Search of Validation"), *Ha-Zeman*, Vol. II (Vilna, April–June 1905).
8. A. D. Gordon, "Universita Ivrit" ("A Hebrew University"), *Ha-Uma ve-ha-Avoda* (Labor and the Nation) (Israel, 1957), p. 168.
9. Katznelson, "Ha-Universita ve-ha-Yishuv be-Eretz Yisrael" ("The University and the *Yishuv* in Palestine"), *Divrei Berl Katznelson al ha-Universita ha-Ivrit (Berl Katznelson's Speeches on the Hebrew University)* (Jerusalem, 1945), p. 17 [hereafter Katznelson].
10. Gordon, p. 178.
11. Katznelson, "*Al ha-Hinuch li-Mevugarim*" ("On Adult Education"), *op. cit.*, p. 26.
12. Summary of Ben-Gurion's words at the corner-stone laying ceremony of the Sede Boker College, October 6 1963, Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.
13. S. Y. Agnon, *Shira* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989). In *Shira*, Agnon gave ironic expression to this sense of detachment on the part of the professors on the "Mountain." Katznelson

distinguished between "social distinctions" rooted in differences of class, and "social distance," rooted in differences of approach. According to Katznelson, the difference between "a pioneering individual," who judges himself and his world according to "the one criterion of Israel's revival," and an "important scientist who remains a cosmopolitan in Palestine, deeply attached to another culture," stems not from social distinctions, but rather from differences in consciousness and approach. Katznelson, "Ovdei ha-Mada le-Sherut ha-Am" ("Scientists in the Service of the People"), op. cit., p. 38.

14. Ibid., p. 43.

15. Ibid., p. 41.

16. Katznelson, "Ha-Universita ve-ha-Histadrut" ("The University and the *Histadrut*"), Ibid., p. 50.

17. See Anita Shapira, ed. *Iggerot Berl Katznelson, 1930-1937 (The Letters of Berl Katznelson, 1930-1937)*, Vol. VI (Tel-Aviv, 1984), p. 189.

18. Katznelson, op. cit., p. 50.

19. Ibid., p. 52.

20. See on this Shalom Ratzabi's Doctoral Thesis, *Ishei Merkaz Eiropan Bi-"Verit Shalom"-Ideologia be-Mivhanei Metzjut, 1925-1945 (The Central Europeans of "Brit Shalom"-Ideology in the Crucible of Reality, 1925-1945)*, Tel-Aviv University, 1995.

21. Berl Katznelson to Ernst Simon, May-June 1935, *Iggerot*, Vol. VI, p. 172.

22. Katznelson, "Al ha-Hinuch Li-Mevugarim," p. 28.

23. Katznelson, "Ovdei ha-Mada le-Sherut ha-Am," p. 44.

24. Ben-Gurion Diary, December 2 1937, Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.

25. Ibid.

26. Katznelson, "Al ha-Hinuch Li-Mevugarim," p. 27.

27. Ibid., p. 28.

28. Berl Katznelson to Hugo Bergman, November 1935 (based on a draft), *Iggerot*, Vol. VI, pp. 207-208.

29. Ben-Gurion's speech at the annual meeting of Friends of the University, Ben-Gurion Diary, December 2 1937, Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.

30. Katznelson, "Ha-Universita be-Hitpathuta" ("Development of the University"), op. cit., pp. 2-3.

31. Katznelson, "Ha-Universita ve-ha-Yishuv be-Eretz Yisrael," Ibid., p. 19; Ben-Gurion Diary, above.

32. Ben-Gurion's speech at the *Keren ha-Yesod* Conference, October 11 1948. Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute; speech on "Atzma'ut Tarbutit" ("Cultural Independence"), May 25 1952, *Hazon va-Derech (Vision and Pathways)*, Tel-Aviv 1961, vol. IV, p. 54; speech on "Erkei ha-Ruah" ("Spiritual Values"), *Hazon va-Derech* (Tel-Aviv, 1957), pp. 281 ff.

33. Katznelson, "Ovdei ha-Mada Le-Sherut ha-Am," p. 46.

34. Ben-Gurion, "Atzma'ut Tarbutit," pp. 49 ff.

35. Ben-Gurion to Nathan Rotenstreich, March 28 1957, Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.

36. Ben-Gurion's speech at the *Keren ha-Yesod* Conference, October 11 1943, Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.

37. Two meetings took place between Ben-Gurion and the intellectuals. The first was held on March 27, 1949, and the second on October 11, 1949. The minutes of the meetings are located in the Ben-Gurion Heritage Archives, Sede Boker.

38. First Meeting, p. 20.

39. Ibid., p. 25.



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Judah L. Magnes as a youth, Oakland home. Caption from family album reads "Reflections ... not Rabbinical"



Temple Emanuel, San Francisco, 1867

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Judah L. Magnes, Louis Ginzberg, and Samson Benderly with others grouped around Solomon Schechter, Tannersville, New York, c. 1907

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Comrades in Berlin 1900: Judah L. Magnes, Max Schloessinger, Arthur Biram, Gotthold Weil, Emil Bernhard Cohn; Jerusalem 1938

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Albert Einstein in Jerusalem with (from left) British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, Lady Samuel, Attorney General Norman Bentwich, Helen Bentwich, Elsa Einstein (standing behind him), and friends, 1923

Courtesy of Hebrew University Photographic Archives



The Hebrew University's first picture, taken in 1924 – students and staff of the Institute of Chemistry, with Professor Andor Fodor at the center and Chaim Weizmann to his left

Courtesy of Hebrew University Photographic Archives



Courtesy of Hebrew University Photographic Archives

Beatrice Lowenstein Magnes, sister-in-law of Louis Marshall, and Judah Leib Magnes



Courtesy of Hebrew University Photographic Archives

Judah L. Magnes with the first class of students at the Institute of Jewish Studies, 1925

The View from Scopus: Judah L. Magnes and the Early Years of the Hebrew University

ARTHUR A. GOREN

BETWEEN 1918 AND 1925, ON FOUR SEPARATE OCCASIONS, inaugural ceremonies on Mount Scopus heralded the establishment of the Hebrew University. In retrospect, they appear as prologues announcing the themes and introducing the protagonists of Judah Magnes' embattled incumbency as first chancellor of the Hebrew University—from 1925 when he was elected to the position soon after the official opening of the University, until 1935 when the office was abolished and he was given the honorary title of President. The emotions and expectations these events provoked also explain in part the intensity of the contentiousness of the decade of Magnes' stewardship of the University. Thus to revisit these celebrations is to gain some understanding of both the persona and the issues that made the university, minuscule in size though it was, the focus of competing intellectual, political, and academic doctrines. What should be the character of the university—a great public institution, academic haven for victims of discrimination and instrument of nation-building? Or should it be an elitist institution, above Zionist politics, a lodestar for the far-flung Jewish world whose scientists would take their place among the honored members of the international community of scholars? Finally, what balance should be struck between the fervor for Jewish cultural renewal and the pursuit of science. For the champions of the former view, Judaic studies was the heart of the university. For other advocates of the university, the natural sciences were the indispensable and immediate requirement for building the national home. Intruding upon these issues were the external agendas of, and personal tensions between the two central figures of these early years of creation. On one side was Chaim Weizmann, the political chief of the World Zionist Organization operating out of London who directed the organization's university committee among a myriad of other Zionist projects. On the other stood Judah Magnes, the maverick American Zionist who in November 1922 settled in Jerusalem and joined the recently-formed Jerusalem committee for the university which immediately challenged the hegemony of London.

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On July 24, 1918, with Jerusalem still within artillery range of the Turkish army, Chaim Weizmann presided over the cornerstone laying ceremony of the University on Mount Scopus on a plot of land, formerly the Sir John Grey-Hill estate, purchased barely six months earlier by the Zionists. Before an assembly of nearly six thousand and in the presence of General Edmund Allenby, the commanding general of the British forces in Palestine, French, Italian, and American representatives, leaders of Jerusalem's religious communities (including Moslems, Christians, and Jews), and delegations sent by the Jewish settlements and institutions, Weizmann signed the dedicatory scroll. He then cemented into place the first of fourteen stones that formed the foundation pillar of the university. Among the others who followed suit were the chief rabbis, the Mufti of Jerusalem, the Anglican bishop, and representatives of the Zionist movement, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, various Jewish professional associations, and settlements. The pageantry had all the earmarks of an affair of state. Officers wore their dress uniforms and soldiers chosen from the various battalions of the Jewish legion formed an honor guard. Permission to hold the ceremony had required extensive negotiations with the British Home Office. Weizmann, the sole speaker, closed his address by reading telegrams of congratulations from Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, the French government and the Emir Feisal, son of the Sharif Hussein, King of Hedjaz, whom Weizmann had recently met.¹

On Weizmann's arrival in Palestine four months earlier in his capacity as the head of the Zionist Commission, he had immersed himself in negotiations with the military government, Arab notables, and the Yishuv's leaders. Standing at the crest of his popularity as the scientist-statesman who had obtained the British cabinet's declaration favoring a Jewish national home in Palestine, he was now eager to strengthen the Zionist political presence in Palestine. Subsequently, he remarked that the cornerstone-laying ceremony was the crowning achievement of his Palestine mission. In fact, on August 31, 1918, when Woodrow Wilson announced his support of the Balfour Declaration, the President praised "the reconstructive work which the Weizmann Commission had done in Palestine" and singled out the laying of the foundation-stone for the Hebrew University as the commission's most significant accomplishment.²

The political weight the Zionists assigned to the university becomes apparent when one considers the fourth ceremonial event, the official opening of the University on April 1, 1925. Weizmann now presided over an even more grandiose spectacle. In the amphitheater of the university which was built for the occasion a crowd of eight thousand gathered to hear the keynote speaker, Lord Balfour, deliver the main address. Present were members of the diplomatic corps representing nine states, the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, Lord Allenby, representatives of sixty-two universities and learned bodies, and leaders of the Zionist movement. The pageant lasted for three days and was marked by a reception at Government House in honor of Lord Balfour and foreign guests, by academic addresses

from professors of the university and visiting scholars, and by the cornerstone laying of the Einstein Institute of Mathematics and Physics in the presence again of Lord Balfour and the High Commissioner.³

Balfour's address was the centerpiece of the celebrations. The worldwide coverage it received turned the event into a political triumph for the Zionist Organization. Balfour's participation represented for the Zionists confirmation of Britain's continued commitment to the National Home. (An Arab strike the day of Balfour's arrival in the country closing down businesses and services in the Arab sector seemed to confirm this interpretation.) The labor weekly, *Ha-poel Ha-tzair*, captured the euphoria of the moment: "It [the opening ceremony] was a magnificent political manifesto. What was said on Mount Scopus . . . in the presence of representatives of the nations, carried more force and political weight than what was said in the [Balfour] Declaration and at San Remo."⁴ As in 1918, the symbol of the University proved to be a useful weapon in the Zionist political arsenal, and a morale-booster for the rank and file of the movement.

This is not to suggest that the university idea, itself, did not occupy a preeminent place in Weizmann's thinking. In fact, he was the key figure in the group of Zionist intellectuals who had advocated the establishment of a university as far back as the early 1900s. After the project lay dormant for a decade, Weizmann revived it in 1913 when he obtained a mandate from the Eleventh Zionist Congress to begin preparatory work for launching the university. He recruited a university committee whose membership was drawn from England, the Continent, the United States, and Palestine; he supervised the selection of a site for the university on Mount Scopus (the Grey-Hill estate) and the acquisition of the land; and he won over several eminent scientists to the idea of a university. The most prominent among them was Paul Ehrlich, a Nobel laureate in medicine and director of the Speyer Institute for Experimental Medicine in Frankfurt. Of equal importance, he won the interest of Baron Edmond de Rothschild for the undertaking, the head of the Paris branch of the Rothschild banking family and long-time supporter of Jewish colonization work in Palestine.

Crucial for understanding the disputes that enveloped later university policy is the condition Baron Rothschild placed on his support: the conception of the university was to be scaled down from a comprehensive teaching institution to a research center or centers modeled after the Pasteur Institute. Undoubtedly Weizmann's acceptance of the condition reflected the reality of the moment. Neither financial resources nor available scholars allowed for anything more than erecting several small institutes. However, his own scientific experience—his occasional stays at the Pasteur Institute and his work in applied research for the British admiralty—also predisposed him in this direction. For years following the opening of the University he opposed the introduction of formal instruction and the granting of degrees until such time as the university had firmly established its reputation as a research center.⁵

The war had slowed even these beginnings. Weizmann had divided his time between his scientific work for the Ministry of Munitions and the negotiations that led to the British cabinet's issuance of the Balfour Declaration in November 1917. The 1918 foundation-stone ceremony, Weizmann hoped, would renew the momentum for a university at the same time that it would fulfill an immediate political need. In Weizmann's mind, the two goals were inseparable.

His address on that occasion was the first authoritative public pronouncement on the university. Delivered on the site where the university would rise and with the consent of the British government, the statement offered a grand vision of the future university of the Jewish people. The university, Weizmann declared, will be a *Hebrew* university, meaning above all else that the language of instruction will be Hebrew. Weizmann was compelled to argue the adaptability of Hebrew for scientific work. Most important, the Hebrew language was essential for the transcendent task of the University which was nothing less than "the rehabilitation of our Jewish consciousness" through the creation of a "unifying center for Jews everywhere." However, Weizmann also stressed that the University would be as all encompassing as the finest of modern universities. "Guided by the spirit of free inquiry," it would not only provide professional training but give "undisturbed opportunity to people with the capacity and devotion for scientific research."⁶

Weizmann also pointed to promising beginnings. In the domain of the sciences, two health centers were fighting malaria and trachoma, an agricultural experimental station was doing commendable work, and the Technical Institute in Haifa had great potential. The University would build on these beginnings by developing the fields of chemistry and bacteriology, geology and climatology. "The true scientific method," he asserted, will bring about "the full cultivation of this fair and fertile land, now so unproductive." In a similar vein, Weizmann noted the unique opportunities Jerusalem afforded for developing the humanities and particularly for Jewish studies. "Ancient Jewish learning" will "be brought to light again and freed from the dust of ages. It will be incorporated in the new life. . . . And so our past will be linked up with the present." What would be more appropriate than beginning with archeology which expressed for Weizmann the singularity of a Hebrew University in Jerusalem and was to his mind the least controversial of the Judaic disciplines—shards over rabbinics.⁷

Who will study at the university? Weizmann foresaw the university as an asylum for the "hundreds of talented young Jews in whom the thirst for learning and critical inquiry have been ingrained by heredity throughout [the] ages" and who "are compelled to satisfy their burning need in un-Jewish, very often unfriendly, surroundings." Here was the case for the university as the answer to academic discrimination in Europe, in contrast to his personal preference for small research institutes. Weizmann stressed another point that seemed incongruent with his own views. The university, he declared, will have to be

“rendered accessible to all classes of the people without compromising its striving for scientific excellence. The Jewish workman and farm laborer must be enabled to find there a possibility of continuing and completing their education in their free hours.”⁸

With a flourish Weizmann concluded: “From this day the Hebrew University is a reality. Our university, formed by Jewish learning and Jewish energy, will mould itself into an integral part of our national structure which is in the process of erection.” The visionary rhetoric fit the occasion. However, in important points, as I have suggested, it ran counter to Weizmann’s own notions of a university. The concept of small, scientific research institutes was hard to reconcile with a popular university. The latter was being urged by Vladimir Jabotinsky, a formidable member of the university committee, who was prepared to compromise on quality in favor of quantity. In fact, in drafting the address Weizmann consulted with Jabotinsky. Speaking from Scopus as the uncrowned leader of World Zionism, Weizmann felt compelled to offer the Zionist justification for a university that most interested European Jewry: an academic home for the student victims of anti-Semitism. It may have been politic, even necessary, on this occasion to moderate his commitment to scientific excellence in favor of an expansive Zionist vision. But in the years ahead, it would exacerbate the debate over the character of the university when Weizmann once again insisted on research over teaching.⁹

For Weizmann, the personification of uncompromising scientific standards was Albert Einstein. Surely, the enormous mutual respect and friendship between the two that developed in the early 1920s stemmed from the scientific ethos they shared. Einstein’s sympathy for Zionism expressed itself most forcefully in his enthusiasm for the university idea. His passionate involvement in the early development of the university derived from the vision he shared with Weizmann: a first-rate research facility would entice the best young Jewish brains to Jerusalem which would be a blessing to the scientists themselves and the country, and redound to the honor of world Jewry. Einstein admired the scientist-activist that he saw in Weizmann. On one occasion after turning down Weizmann’s request to attend a meeting in Holland “for the cause,” Einstein added, “I know the difficulties that are put in the way of your doing an already difficult job. It cannot be easy to be the Chosen of the chosen people.” But in 1921, before he learned to decline Weizmann’s repeated requests to attend meetings, he did accompany him to the United States on the first fund-raising campaign for the University. Thus it was not altogether unexpected when Einstein agreed to spend a week in Palestine en route to Germany from a visit to Japan and to deliver the first academic lecture to be given under the auspices of the Hebrew University.¹⁰

On February 7, 1923 the Hebrew University celebrated its second beginning by symbolically opening its academic doors for the first time to none other than the most celebrated scientist of the day. Einstein’s lecture took place in the small hall of the building on Scopus purchased with the property. Present

was Sir Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner, the senior civil officers of the mandatory government, and members of the Consular Corps. Once again Arab and Jewish notables, heads of the Christian and Moslem institutions, and Zionist officials were in attendance. Zionist flags and the insignia of the twelve tribes draped the hall. A portrait of Herzl alongside the Union Jack and a banner inscribed with the words, “Ora v-tora”—“Light and Learning”—covered the wall behind the speaker’s podium. Menahem Ussishkin, chairman of the Palestine Zionist Executive, presided. In his introductory remarks, he juxtaposed “the temple of the Hebrew University,” “a temple of science to all the nations,” with the “temple of the Universal God, a house of prayer for all the nations,” whose remains were visible from Scopus. Turning to Einstein, he called upon him to “mount the platform which has been waiting for you for 2,000 years.”¹¹

The lecture itself, delivered in French and repeated in German, dealt with his theory of relativity. Obviously, the celebrity rather than the subject drew the crowd. The visibility given the lecture by the presence of officers of state, together with the enthusiastic crowds that greeted Einstein everywhere he toured during his week in the country, placed the university, by association, in the public eye once more. The Palestine visit, which moved him deeply, solidified his interest in the university and strengthened his convictions that Weizmann’s way, establishing quality research institutes, was correct.

In 1923, the year of Einstein’s lecture, Weizmann made the first academic appointment to the university with money raised by the American Jewish Physicians’ Committee (whose establishment in 1921 is attributable to Einstein’s trip to America). In the name of the Zionist Organization’s university committee in London, Weizmann extended an invitation to Andor Fodor, professor of physiological chemistry at the University of Halle, to oversee the construction and equipping of the Chemistry Institute and to become its director. As Weizmann and Einstein both agreed, the institute would be the first of several research departments that would eventually form the faculty of medicine, Weizmann’s plan from the beginning.¹²

By 1923 other, separate initiatives on behalf of the university were underway. Three independent committees located in London, Paris, and Jerusalem, were deliberating over the establishment of an Institute of Jewish Studies. The prominence of a number of eminent rabbis from England, France, and Austria on the European committees aroused fears in secular Zionist circles that the projected institute would take on the character of a German rabbinical seminary. However, in July 1924, the committees, meeting in London with the participation of Weizmann and Magnes, reached an accommodation and announced plans for the first appointments to take effect that fall. Although in principle, Weizmann assigned an important place to Judaic studies in the scheme of the university, he considered developing the sciences far more urgent and far less controversial than Jewish studies. He responded warily to the Institute with its separate financing, autonomous governance, and energetic Jerusalem promoter, Magnes.¹³

The third of the four founding convocations of the university inaugurated the Institute for Jewish Studies. The celebration took place in the lecture hall of the Chemistry Institute on December 22, 1924, the first day of Hanukkah. Once more a ceremonial opening created an aura of sanctity and achievement. As before, the presence of the High Commissioner, Moslem and Christian dignitaries, the heads of learned societies, and senior officials of the Zionist Organization represented a collective recognition and endorsement of the university undertaking. Magnes, the Institute's administrative head (he had no defined title), who presided over the exercises and delivered the keynote address, appropriately opened the exercises with the blessing of Hanukkah, "Who wroughtest miracles for our Fathers in those days and in our own."¹⁴

Understandably the *Jewish* calling of the Institute imbued the opening with historical-religious associations of revival and redemption that surpassed the 1918 and 1923 celebrations. The "temple of science" that Ussishkin proclaimed at Einstein's inaugural lecture became in Magnes' address "a holy place, a sanctuary in which to learn and teach . . . all that Judaism has made and created from the time of the Bible until our days."¹⁵ The Institute, Magnes, affirmed, would do nothing less than address the question, "What is Judaism?" At the Institute, through "research and the scientific method" and by "making use of the complete apparatus that the scientific method places at our disposal," all who wished would "elucidate" Judaism. Lest there be any doubts, Magnes emphasized the Institute's secular commitment to the free pursuit of knowledge. What the Institute of Jewish Studies possessed that made it truly different from and superior to all other centers of Jewish scholarship, Magnes stressed, was its "*genius loci*," its physical location in Eretz Israel and more specifically in Jerusalem. Magnes recited the verse which for the assembled was Isaiah's prophecy come true, "For the Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of God from Jerusalem."¹⁶

He concluded with the grand vision of an Institute of Jewish Studies that would eventually encompass all of the humanities. In their natural habitat, it would no longer be necessary or desirable to compartmentalize Jewish studies; the particular and the universal would be studied as a harmonious whole. Thus the humanities, he explained, would be viewed through the prism of Jewish studies. (To the joint committee meeting in London in July 1924, he offered this example of "our method of approach:" one would begin teaching the Greek language, culture, and religion with texts that had some relation to Judaism, for example, the Septuagint, Philo, and Josephus.)¹⁷ "We want the Jewish spiritual view of life to be deepened and broadened, so that it may help broaden the spiritual life of humanity. We want to help save mankind."¹⁸

This lofty vision summed up for Magnes the mission of the university: striking national roots in the homeland in order to serve universal ideals more readily. This was a Zionism linked to the classical teachings of Reform Judaism Magnes had imbibed as a young man. Time would demonstrate that Magnes was sincere in believing that the university must occupy the high moral ground

removed from narrow parochialism and above all from entanglement in the perils of Zionist politics. Weizmann would find such a position insufferable. For Weizmann saving Jews came first, or, in institutional terms, building a university was allied with, if not subservient to, the Zionist movement.¹⁹

Contemporaries viewed the parade of pageants culminating in the official opening of the University in April 1925 as landmark events. Each in its time elicited wide-spread interest and approval. In fact, their very success muted the tensions and divisions that mounted as the university became a reality and issues of governance, finances, priorities, and appointments required resolution. During this period, from 1923 to 1926, Magnes moved from rank-and-file member in the Jerusalem committee to its leader, then to a coequal position with Weizmann in University planning, and finally to the chancellorship. To appreciate his swift rise and the sources of the complex relationship with Weizmann which ensued, one must return briefly to the Jerusalem committee's activities.

On joining the committee, Magnes found himself among a group of kindred souls united in asserting the Yishuv's parity in Zionist affairs. The committee's foremost members were Menahem Ussishkin, Israel Klausner, the historian and publicist, David Yellin, a Jerusalem-born Arabist and educator, the revered Ahad Ha'am and within the year, the "national poet," Chayim Nachman Bialik. In November 1922, the Jerusalem committee presented London with a detailed program for launching a *fakulta lama'aday ha-ruah*, a faculty of the humanities. Jewish studies would obviously occupy an important place but not monopolize the humanities curriculum. Blending Jewish studies with the general humanities, the committee argued, would give the university in Jerusalem a special character, demarcating it from the one kind of Jewish school of higher learning known in the Diaspora, the rabbinical seminary. Moreover, launching a "true" university, the Jerusalem committee argued, would attract Palestinian Jewish youth who otherwise would study abroad, and it would win the University a respected place in the government's eyes and in international academic circles, thus enhancing the standing of the Jewish National Home. In the same memorandum the Jerusalem committee reported on negotiations it had initiated with potential faculty and proposed a division of authority between London and Jerusalem which located the executive direction of the university in Jerusalem, fund-raising in London, and appointments by mutual consent, with the official invitations coming from London. Less than a year later, chafing at what it considered to be London's lethargy and ignorance of local conditions, the committee announced its intention of opening a "faculty of arts." In this way, it hoped to force London's hand and to assume the leadership of the university enterprise.²⁰ The committee proposed to London that Eugen Täubler, the classical historian, be appointed dean of the faculty, explaining that apart from his international reputation he had "a name in general scholarship and not merely in Jewish learning."²¹

Magnes proved to be an enormous asset to the committee particularly because of his connections with American Jewry. During his public career in America he had been astonishingly successful in winning the confidence of a number of communally-minded German Jewish philanthropists as well as leaders of the immigrant community. Louis Marshall, his brother-in-law and the head of the American Jewish Committee, and Felix Warburg, son-in-law of Jacob Schiff, a partner in Kuhn and Loeb, and chairman of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, to mention but two, were devoted friends. In the 1920s, they were powerful figures in American Jewish life. Magnes, an Ahad Ha'am Zionist since his student days in Berlin, had also forged personal ties with leaders of the Yishuv whom he knew from his early visits to Palestine and from their money-raising forays in America. Moreover, Magnes and Weizmann had at one time had the most cordial of relationships. From 1912 to 1914, when Weizmann revived the university project, Magnes was his American correspondent and was filled with admiration for Weizmann's accomplishments. On one point they disagreed. In their speculations on the university-to-be, Weizmann favored giving priority to a medical faculty which meant beginning with the establishment of departments in the natural sciences. For Magnes the starting point was a "Jewish school of archaeology which should develop into a school of *Geisteswissenschaften* (humanities) treated from the Jewish point of view." Curing malaria and trachoma were uppermost in Weizmann's mind; renewing Judaism from the ground up excited Magnes' imagination. Over the years although both proclaimed their commitment to a university encompassing all fields of scholarly endeavor, Weizmann perceived Magnes as indifferent to the sciences. Most painful of all, during the years that Weizmann kept the university idea alive, particularly between 1917 and 1922, a gaping political chasm opened between them. America's entry into the war turned Magnes to pacifism and in its wake to such American domestic causes as civil liberties and non-intervention in the Russian civil war. He now viewed Weizmann's great war-time triumphs, the Balfour Declaration and the ratification of the mandate by the League of Nations, as the illegitimate offspring of British imperialism. In 1923, in Jerusalem, he grasped at the opportunity to build an apolitical fellowship, a Hebrew University, where he could fulfill his Jewish and universal impulses.²²

Felix Warburg made it possible. In April 1924, soon after his return from a visit to Palestine, Warburg informed Magnes of his intention to contribute \$100,000 to the Institute of Jewish Studies. He wanted the fund to be administered by Magnes and "those he might select." Magnes convinced Warburg to withdraw the condition and to drop a second one "guaranteeing" that Magnes occupy "a leading position" in the university. Magnes explained: "I should not want to have it seem as though I had tried to interest you in the university with myself in mind." Nevertheless, the situation was obvious enough to the informed: Magnes represented Warburg and had access to America's millionaires.²³

In his correspondence with Warburg, Magnes discussed another matter that would define the impending controversy between Weizmann and himself. He was “absolutely in accord” with Warburg that University affairs be administered in Jerusalem. “An absentee committee would spell a failure.” The London committee wanted headquarters to be in London, “whereas the only possible headquarters for a Jerusalem university is Jerusalem,” Magnes wrote. He envisioned a university board of trustees including representatives of the existing European, Palestinian, and American committees as well as a number of eminent scholars and philanthropists. But the Jerusalem committee’s representatives on the board, Magnes proposed, would have full authority to run the university between the annual meetings of the international board. It was clear that Magnes was the single figure on the Jerusalem committee who might head a university administration.²⁴

The first fruits of the Warburg gift were quick to follow. That July the different committees co-sponsoring the Institute of Jewish Studies met in London. They adopted Magnes’ blueprint for the Institute and authorized him to negotiate for faculty: by November the first professors were offering instruction. This impressive leap forward kindled the latent differences between the Weizmann and Magnes camps. Compounding the differences was the absence of a university framework of accepted procedures and regulations. Instead, a confusing mix of disparate academic conventions—British, German, and American—filled the vacuum.²⁵

The historian David Myers has suggested that the hostility between Weizmann and Magnes reflected the conflict between London and Jerusalem—between the imperial capital and the province—in other words, between the executive of the World Zionist Organization and the University’s in-place administrators. In this analysis, the question of “who knows what is best” for the University was a microcosm of the larger issue of a newly assertive Yishuv challenging the hegemony of the diaspora-located Zionist executive. Were the University and the Yishuv capable of self-government?²⁶ Magnes wasted no time in making his view known. Replying to Weizmann’s congratulatory cable following the announcement of Warburg’s gift (in which Weizmann “implored” Magnes to have the donation that was earmarked for Jewish studies go instead to a “general university committee”), Magnes warned that “absentee management” must be prevented.²⁷ Directing university affairs from London, Magnes argued, would not only be inefficient and costly, “but it would be continuing the treatment of the Palestine population as a kind of ‘native’ that required benevolent handling from the outside.”²⁸

In truth, this is what the Weizmann group believed. Magnes and his Jerusalem confederates were the “natives,” academically and professionally unqualified to lead a university. London made its position clear as early as July 1925, barely four months after the official opening of the University and the first meeting of the newly constituted Board of Governors. A specially convened meeting of the Zionist Organization’s executive voted to delay the

transfer of the University properties from the Zionist Organization to the new Board—as agreed upon at the Board of Governors meeting in April—until binding stipulations concerning the governance of the University were adopted. The major change the Zionists demanded was the placing of the control of policy and administration in the hands of a President of the Board of Trustees and two of its members, who were “*not resident in Palestine*” (emphasis mine). The three officers, answerable only to the annual meeting of the Board, would supervise University affairs by keeping in “close touch with the Executive Officer in Palestine.” In a letter to Warburg explaining its action, M. E. Eder, the chairman of the University Committee in London wrote, “The [Zionist] Executive cannot ignore the fact that there does not exist in Palestine that intellectual atmosphere which is essential for the evolution of a university in general and particularly one that is intended to represent the intellectual traditions and to give scope to the foremost intellectual workers of world Jewry.” Eder explained further that the Zionist Executive “had received representations in this sense from such outstanding leaders of thought as Professor Einstein and Professor [Edmund] Landau and others.”²⁹

It is noteworthy that the “leaders of thought” mentioned by name were scientists. It appears that Weizmann felt that the Institute of Jewish Studies had slipped beyond the control of the University. Besides, what mattered most to him were the sciences. Landau, the eminent professor of mathematics at the University of Goettingen, had delivered one of the academic lectures at the opening of the University in 1925 *in Hebrew* and would join the Board of Governors at its second meeting held in Munich in September 1925. However, it was Einstein who most vigorously contested the competence of the incipient administration in Jerusalem headed by Magnes (a conviction that became more acerbic and uncompromising with the passage of time).³⁰ A member of the original nine-member Board of Governors and in close contact with Weizmann, Einstein now expressed his fears of the University becoming a *Bauernuniversität* (a peasants’ university). A few weeks before the second meeting of the Board of Governors in September 1925, he warned Magnes that it would be “very dangerous” (*höchst gefährlich*) for him to present a budget and development plan to the meeting. The “intellectual power” (*geistige Potentz*) of the Palestine scientific community, he explained, was too meager to plan and direct the University. (In response to Einstein’s misgivings, an Academic Advisory Committee headed by Einstein was appointed at the September meeting.)³¹

The July decision of the Zionist executive and the disparaging talk it kindled evoked an outraged response from Jerusalem. Undoubtedly formulated by Magnes it was also signed by Bialik and Ahad Ha’am “For the Board of Governors.” This closely reasoned memorandum categorically rejected the notion that only non-Palestinian policy-makers could win the confidence and support of scholars of world eminence and major donors. The Palestinian governors declared: “A controlling Executive outside of Palestine and a

subordinate administration in Palestine is merely repeating the blunder against which self-respecting Jews, and primarily the Zionists, have been contending for years. Zionist literature is full of justified protests against the policy of great organizations doing their work in Palestine through administrative agents and officers who are responsible to a controlling Executive outside of Palestine."³²

The London-Jerusalem, metropolitan-provincial rivalry, merged with the perennial question of the relationship between the sovereign state and the self-governing university, that is, the formal connection between the Zionist Organization and the University. For the Zionist leadership, Magnes' immediate successes in winning the financial support of American philanthropists posed the danger of losing one of the movement's prime agencies for rebuilding the National Home. Non-Zionist supporters worried about the politicization of the University and the subversion of its academic integrity through "nationalistic, chauvinistic arrogance," in Magnes' words.³³

At the first meeting of the Board of Governors of the university, held in Tel Aviv ten days after the official opening, the issue arose in connection with finances. Weizmann remarked that the university would require a regular contribution from the "public exchequer" which would correspond to a state grant to English universities: "The natural and only source of such a contribution in our case will be the Jewish Agency, which shall include a substantial grant to the university . . . in its annual budget. For such reasons the Constitution of the university should be drawn up jointly with the Jewish Agency, and the latter should be adequately represented on the governing body of the university."

Magnes expressed his aversion for state universities "where freedom of science was imperiled." What he had in mind, Weizmann remarked, was "a state-sided [assisted?], not a state-controlled university." Without pressing the point he suggested that sooner or later the relations with the "public exchequer," i.e., "the Jewish Agency" were bound to arise.³⁴

Weizmann's reference to the "Jewish Agency" rather than "Zionist Organization" or "Zionist Executive" was deliberate. For the past year, he had been conducting grueling negotiations with Louis Marshall over the establishment of an "enlarged Jewish Agency." (The negotiations would last another four years before they were consummated.) In May 1924, a joint committee adopted the principle of cooperation between Zionists and non-Zionists in sharing responsibility for building the Jewish National Home. And in March of 1925, yet another conference reaffirmed the understanding. On that occasion Weizmann and Marshall agreed privately that the president of the World Zionist Organization would be president of the proposed Jewish Agency. Thus Weizmann came to the opening of the University in April and to the first meeting of the Board of Governors, at least in his mind, as the president designate of the Jewish people.³⁵

However, in the minds of Magnes and his non-Zionist allies, the Zionist Organization continued to be a political movement, one more partisan group

in Jewish life albeit an important one. To give it a controlling say in the University meant subverting the essence of a university. In a letter to Weizmann during a later crisis in the negotiations for the establishment of the Jewish Agency, Marshall attacked the Zionists for their partisanship. He used the University as a case in point: "It certainly will not help matters to have the idea go forth that the Hebrew University at Jerusalem is to be a tail to the Zionist kite; in other words, that it is to be controlled by the Zionist Organization. If that should be the result, it would be far better if the University had never been created. Politically I am a Republican, but I should consider it a great misfortune if any of our universities in the United States was to be considered as an adjunct to the Republican Party. Politics and education should never be joined."³⁶ The analogy of the Zionist Organization's activities in Palestine and the Republican Party in American politics was beyond the comprehension of the Zionists. For non-Zionists like Marshall, the Zionist Organization's claim to hegemonic control of all matters pertaining to the Homeland—to its cultural and educational no less than its economic and political spheres—was equally incomprehensible. As Jews, they, too, had a say.

Magnes' response was no less forthright than his American supporters. During the stormy summer of 1925, he expressed his fears of Weizmann's scheme to dominate the University. "If he [Weizmann] wants to be President, and is willing to give up his Presidency of the political organization and to devote himself entirely to the University, with his home in Jerusalem, I should probably be willing to withdraw as Chairman and help in such other ways as I could. But I regard it as fatal to the University and its scientific spirit for one man to be running a political movement and at the same time to be President of a University. We must try as far as possible to keep the University out of the muck of politics." At the Munich meeting of the Board of Governors in September 1925, he opposed Weizmann's nomination to head the Board for these reasons. Interim regulations were adopted, pending the drafting of a constitution, which attempted to bridge the disagreement. A presidium of two—Weizmann and Einstein—was elected to head the Board, and Magnes and Norman Bentwich were elected chancellor and vice chancellor. (The confusion over academic nomenclature was symptomatic of the conflict of university traditions: "chancellor" in the American or in the British sense—chief executive officer or honorary figurehead? In Britain the "vice-chancellor" was the executive head of the university; in the United States he was the assistant to the chancellor. When "rector" was proposed the question arose: an annually elected, honorific post as in German universities, or the powerful long-term academic head of a Scottish university?) Weizmann and Einstein assumed that the office of the presidium with policy-making powers would be in London. Magnes interpreted the decisions as placing the executive functions (administrative *and* academic) in the hands of the chancellor who was resident in Jerusalem. Two sets of minutes were distributed, one from London and one from Jerusalem, each supporting contrary views. In fact, an incensed Einstein

demanded that Magnes withdraw his “incorrect” version. A year later, at the next meeting of the Board, which took place in London, a provisional constitution was adopted, Weizmann was elected president, Einstein chair of the Academic Council, and Magnes was confirmed as chancellor.³⁷

Clearly, the issue of the relationship between the University and the Zionist establishment, and the conflict over the chancellor’s authority and competence was not resolved at Munich. In a remarkable exchange of letters between Weizmann and Magnes in the fall of 1925 both questions were addressed. In relating to the former one, Magnes explained that he was as “anxious” as Weizmann that “the Zionist influence make itself felt in the University in a thorough-going way. Anything else is inconceivable.” But he opposed “control” by the Zionist Organization which was different from “Zionist influence.” Furthermore, since “the University should be a University for the whole Jewish people,” it could not belong to “this or that section of the Jewish people.” In his reply Weizmann asked how else Zionist influence could be articulated except through the Zionist Organization. “Whatever its weaknesses,” he wrote, the Zionist Organization was “the only big democratic Jewish organization through which every Jew who is keen on this work can express himself and bring his spiritual values and aspirations to bear on the shaping of this new spiritual center.” Why should the influence “of a great organization which has constantly to render account of its doings to its adherents and to the public at large be necessarily worse than that of a few men of finance who make big contributions?” (Weizmann obviously was alluding to the American model of a board of trustees.)³⁸ This was the affliction endemic to Jewish politics in Weizmann’s eyes, and only a persistent, patient hand could cope with it.

In the context of Jewish affairs, the University was part of Weizmann’s political strategy: the necessity of creating a grand alliance between “the men of finance” and “the great organization” of the Jewish people. The same principals engaged in planning, financing, and staffing the University were immersed in negotiating the proposal for an enlarged Jewish Agency. For “the men of finance,” the University was a test of the good faith of the Zionists in building a non-political institution. For a moment, in the spring and summer of 1925, the outcome appeared promising. The renewed Weizmann-Marshall agreement to establish the Jewish Agency, as we have seen, seemed to be replicating the cautious collaboration that resulted in the opening of the University. A meeting of Marshall, Weizmann, and Magnes in Geneva that August discussed not only University but also Agency affairs, and agreement was reached on all points. However, yet another crisis over the Agency issue was festering and about to break.

A cursory consideration of the stormiest of the clashes—the Crimea episode—underscores the ideological and personal tensions that pervaded the emerging interlocking directorate that dealt with world Jewish issues and with the University. An understanding between the Warburg-and-Marshall-led

Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the major American Jewish relief organization, to cooperate with the Keren Hayesod, the Zionist settlement fund, failed to materialize. Instead the JDC launched a fifteen million dollar campaign to resettle Russian Jews in agricultural settlements in the Crimea and Ukraine (the Agro-Joint project) with Soviet government approval. The JDC campaign of 1925/1926 highlighted the Crimea and downplayed Palestine. For the Zionists, particularly the American Zionist leaders responsible for the Keren Hayesod, the Agro-Joint project was the ultimate anti-Zionist act. They condemned Marshall and Warburg for an act of duplicity perpetrated not only at a time when negotiations for the enlarged Jewish Agency were on the table but when a severe economic crisis gripped the Yishuv and brought desperate calls for increased funds from America. In the inflamed debate, Marshall accused the Zionists of partisanship. Their "chauvinistic" Zionism prevented them from considering the needs of world Jewry such as the desperate conditions of Russian Jewry which Palestine was unable to solve. The argument was reminiscent of the University debate: the Zionist vision of the University as both the instrument for building the national home and the spiritual and academic center of World Jewry, and the non-Zionists' perception of yet another worthy undertaking of the Jewish people to be supported if insulated from partisan considerations. In both the negotiations over the Agency and the University, the centrality of Zion was the issue.³⁹

By June 1926, the crisis deepened. Weizmann prepared to leave for the United States to salvage the Jewish Agency negotiations. He consulted with Magnes despite their escalating confrontation over the University. Weizmann in fact pressed Magnes to accompany him to America to mediate the stand-off with Marshall. Magnes maintained constant contact with Marshall and Warburg, proposed conciliatory formulas, and when his presence was deemed inappropriate by Marshall (who wanted no mediators), he wrote a long, poignant, and supportive letter to Weizmann. It was a superb analysis of the power players Weizmann would face and their psychology. Magnes' operative suggestion was a quid pro quo understanding: the Zionists to recognize the legitimacy of the Agro-Joint project on condition that the non-Zionists vastly increase their support for the Yishuv. For better or for worse, the two parties were enmeshed in a net of common concerns.⁴⁰

It is illuminating to note that precisely during these months, June through October 1926, the jockeying over the control of the University continued unabated. Warburg objected to the overrepresentation of professors and Zionists on the Board of Governors and once again raised the fear of "politicization." In another sphere, Magnes' leadership continued to come under intense criticism. In a letter to Einstein following a visit to Palestine, Weizmann described Magnes as "a dilettante in Jewish matters" [the Institute of Jewish Studies] and, far worse, incompetent in dealing with the departments of science. He was incapable, for example, of rectifying the mismanagement of the Institute of Chemistry under Fodor, a Weizmann appointee, one should

recall. "Unfortunately, I see no possibility yet of replacing Magnes. . . . It will therefore be necessary for a representative of the Praesidium and of the Zionist Organization in Jerusalem to share the responsibility until there are more professors there. Magnes' autocracy must be broken." Several months later when Einstein threatened to resign from the Board of Governors unless Magnes was stripped of all academic authority, Weizmann pleaded for patience. Much as he was determined to be rid of Magnes, he could not now "personally lead the attack against Dr. M[agnes] in view of my political responsibilities." In the letter to Einstein, Weizmann informed him that he had told Magnes in no uncertain terms of "the general indignation over his autocratic administration and constant reliance on American moneybags. . . . It would be more dignified for the University not to accept such donations rather than be perpetually dependent on the whims and threats of the donor." Unhappily for Weizmann, winning over these "American moneybags" for the cause of the enlarged Jewish Agency—in all likelihood he had Warburg in mind most of all—was the urgent task before him.⁴¹

How intertwined the two enterprises were is evident from Warburg's hope that Magnes would join him as co-chairman of the enlarged Jewish Agency. As the negotiations moved to a conclusion, Warburg visited Palestine in the spring of 1929 to convince Magnes to join a triumvirate—Magnes, Weizmann, and himself—to lead the long-awaited Agency *and* to lead the University. Magnes would assume co-equal responsibility in directing the affairs of the central authority of the Jewish people, and Weizmann, the nominal president of the University, would be given co-equal executive authority (responsibility for the science program). Magnes' response was an unqualified no: "Keep me out of the Agency, and keep Weizmann out of the University." Once more he launched into a discourse on the evils inherent in the exercise of state authority over education. He offered the case of the Yishuv's educational system which was "totally dependent upon the Zionist political machinery." Fortunately, the University was financially independent of the Zionist machinery. It could avoid the bargaining, nepotism, sacrifice of ideas and learning, and ultimately the regimentation of mind and conscience that would inevitably follow once the state—the Zionist establishment—determined University policies.⁴²

Was the reverse permissible? Was the chancellor of the Hebrew University speaking *ex cathedra* free to attack the policies of the Zionist Organization? Days after the signing of the "Pact of Glory"—the ceremonial launching of the Jewish Agency in Zurich on August 14, 1929—Arab riots broke out in Palestine and 400 Jews were killed, and Louis Marshall died in Zurich in September following an emergency operation that failed to save his life. The Jewish world was thrown into a tumult of mass meetings protesting Arab brutality and British apathy, and Zionist leaders braced themselves for the anticipated Royal Commission of Inquiry and an inevitable White Paper. The Arab national question was in the eye of the storm as it had never been before.⁴³ Writing to

Bentwich from Zurich shortly after Marshall's death, Magnes gave vent to his agitation. Zionist policy was bankrupt. "Our conscience cannot be clear unless we publicly renounce the older political aims of Zionism and publicly adhere to a conception of Zionism that is based upon equal rights. . . . Our aim is not political domination, but the creation of a spiritual and ethical and religious center for Judaism." Then came the fateful inner call: "I begin to feel it to be my duty to speak again after years of silence. . . . [Until now] I have been all too satisfied to give myself wholly to the university, and to keep it away from politics. But I cannot hold my peace any longer, and if I speak, do I not *eo ipso* drag the University in? And if I do not speak I could not even attempt to collect another dollar or persuade any new men to come, or remain responsible for the spirit or the administration of the University."⁴⁴

The convocation opening the academic year, which took place in November, provided Magnes with an admirable opportunity to present his political views. Later, he explained that he could no longer "leave politics to others." Recent events had made him realize again "that, after all, politics means lives and all too often, too, the determination of moral, social, and even religious issues." The heart of his address was his long-held belief that an accord with the Arabs must take precedence over Zionism's political goals. Two peoples and three religions shared the Holy Land. It was a land *sui generis* where no group could dominate the other. "If the only way of establishing the Jewish National Home is upon the bayonets of some Empire, our whole enterprise is not worth while."⁴⁵

The address received world-wide coverage and created a storm in Jewish circles. What further exacerbated the situation were the secret negotiations Magnes entered into during the fall of 1929 with Harry St. John Philby, reputedly the advisor of King Ibn Saud. Convinced that his political neutrality would enable him to mediate an accommodation with the Arabs, Magnes was in touch with the British High Commissioner, the Mufti of Jerusalem, the publisher of *The New York Times*, and Warburg. Weizmann was furious, lashed out at Magnes for his public pronouncements and unauthorized private diplomacy. He demanded that Warburg muzzle Magnes and looked into the legal basis for removing Magnes from office.⁴⁶

The response of a Magnes sympathizer is interesting. Cyrus Adler, a non-Zionist, confidant of Marshall and Warburg, and President of the Jewish Theological Seminary, took Magnes to task. He reminded him of the reasons he had refused Warburg's invitation to become co-chairman of the Jewish Agency. "You argued that it had been your constant fight to keep the university out of politics and if you went into the Agency you, as head of the university, would be in politics." What distressed Adler was less the convocation address than Magnes' action as self-appointed mediator when he represented no one but himself.⁴⁷

In his first five years of the stewardship of the University, Magnes guided the stripling University with a strong hand, realistic goals, and a modest budget,

nearly all of which he raised. He withstood the incessant attacks of Weizmann and Einstein. Both wanted instantaneous success—a small, select research facility headed by a distinguished scientist. (Periodically rumors suggested that Weizmann himself was ready to fill the position.) One also needs to recall the extravagant expectations aroused in the Jewish world by the successive openings of the University culminating in the 1925 festivities. A great academy of the Jewish people now existed, providing spiritual sustenance for the reborn nation! Weizmann, Zionism's visionary and leader, used this majestic image of the University in the public realm. Just prior to the official opening of the University, Magnes recorded in his journal: "The falsehood of 'opening' what does not exist. Warburg [calls it] '*Ein jüdische Bluff*.'" Magnes went on, "For sake of big impression, making of University a propaganda instrument."⁴⁸

For a time during the early 1920s, the imminent opening of the University served as an important clarion call for Zionism and a bright ornament in Zionist settlement work in Palestine. By the middle of the decade, it became clear that building a university required financial resources that were beyond the reach of the Zionist movement. In Weizmann's mind, a Hebrew University in Jerusalem was the ideal means of winning the support of the great men of wealth who rejected Zionism *per se*. By definition it was apolitical; its concerns were spiritual, cultural, and scientific; hence it enabled non-Zionists to collaborate with Zionists. Financing and governing the University in partnership would prepare the way for the monumental task of building the National Home. The joint venture of Zionists and non-Zionists who undertook to establish the University preceded and was linked to the formation of the enlarged Jewish Agency. True, discord and tension were ever present. Nevertheless, the uneasy alliance produced results that would have been impossible otherwise.

Beginning in late 1929, the stormy political world Magnes had entered proved too brutal for him to maintain his position of pre-eminence. Neither his American supporters, whose contributions dropped drastically following the 1929 financial crash, nor his academic supporters at the University, possessed the strength to defeat the rising opposition to his administration. Several more years passed before the forces of academic discontent, with Weizmann's and Einstein's encouragement, coalesced with Magnes' political opponents to put an end to his singular leadership. In 1935, at the end of a decade as chancellor, he could point to modest but significant progress: a student body of 450, an academic staff of 90 including 20 refugee scholars, and faculties of science and the humanities governed by a University senate. Now as president, a purely honorary position, Magnes turned Scopus into a pulpit calling for the moral reordering of Zionist goals, in his mind, a worthy task for the representative head of the Hebrew University. He had raged against what he believed was the danger of the political subversion of academic freedom by the state, that is, the Zionist organization. Now, a political dissenter, he saw his behavior as the hallmark of the university tradition of intellectual freedom. There was truth in both judgments.⁴⁹

NOTES

1. *Yom hage-nu, pratey ha-hagiga shel ha-nahat even ha-pina l-binyan ha-universita ha-ivrit b-yerushalyim* (Jerusalem, 1917/18), pp. 8–12, 19–21; Weizmann to Vera Weizmann, July 27, 1918 in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Deborah Barzilay and Barnet Litvinoff (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1977), Vol. 8, pp. 237–38; Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 258–59. I want to thank Hagit Lavsky for allowing me to read her illuminating paper, “Sheva shnot yesod, 1918–1925,” which will appear in a collection of articles on the Hebrew University. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Shaul Katz, the coordinator of the Hebrew University History Project for suggesting a number of lines of inquiry and for alerting me to the work in progress at the Hebrew University. Professors Moses Rischin and Leonard Binder commented on an earlier version of this paper presented at the conference marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem held at the University of California in Berkeley, October 29–30, 1995. I benefited as well from the critique of a later version by Professors Ezra Mendelsohn and Deborah Dash Moore.
2. Jehuda Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Statesman*, pp. 235–59; *The Maccabaeans*, Vol. 31, No. 10 (October 1918): 285; Melvin I. Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), pp. 147–48.
3. *New York Times*, April 1, 1925: 25; April 2: 1; April 3: 19, 23; *Ha-Aretz*, March 30, 1925, Supplement. *The Hebrew University, Inauguration, April 1, 1925* (Jerusalem, 1925), pp. 5–13. Also see David Hurwitz, “Balfour on Mount Scopus,” *Judaism*, Vol. 44 No. 4 (Fall 1995): 485–498.
4. *New York Times*, April 2, 1925: 1; *The New Palestine*, Vol. 8, No. 14 (April 8, 1925): 459–60; *Hapoel Ha'tzair*, No. 26–27 (April 8, 1925): 34. *Ha-Aretz*, April 3, 1925: 2, 3.
5. On Weizmann's initiatives on behalf of the university from 1912 to 1914, see Jehuda Reinharz, “Laying the Foundation for a University in Jerusalem: Chaim Weizmann's Role, 1913–1914,” *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Feb. 1984): 1–38; Reinharz, *Chaim Weizmann: The Making of a Zionist Leader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 375–401. On the purchase of the Mount Scopus land, see Yossie Katz, “Ha-mifne biyahsam shel Usishkin vekhovevey tzion lipituakh yerushalayim vilikhakamat ha-universita ha-ivrit lifney milkhemet ha-olam ha-rishona,” in *Yerushalyim bitodaa uvaasiya ha-tziyonit*, Edited by Hagit Lavsky (Jerusalem, 1989), p. 130–36. See also David Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 46–48, and his contribution to this symposium, “A New Scholarly Colony in Jerusalem: Notes on the Early History of Jewish Studies.”
6. *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann* (Series B, *Papers*), Vol. 1, p. 193.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
9. Reinharz, *The Making of a Zionist Leader*, p. 259; Reinharz, “Laying the Foundation for a University,” 26–28; Hagit Lavsky, “Sheva shnot yesod, 1918–1925,” pp. 4–5.
10. Ronald W. Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times* (New York: World Pub. Co., 1971), pp. 270–271, 381–391. Einstein replied positively to Weizmann's invitation to join the proposed enlarged Jewish Agency provided it would not require him to travel and attend meetings (Weizmann to Einstein, Oct. 23, 1923, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Joshua Freundlich, Vol. 12, pp. 8–9). For an overview of Einstein's relationship to the Hebrew University based on the Einstein Archives, see Ze'ev Rosenkranz, “Albert Einstein's Involvement in the Affairs of the Hebrew University, 1919–1935,” *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1993), Vol. 3 (B, History of the Jewish People, Modern Times): 228–234. For a detailed discussion of the work of the London Committee from 1919 to 1925 see Lavsky, “Sheva Shnot yesod.”
11. *Ha-aretz*, February 11, 1923: 3. For an account of the ceremony differing in minor details and for Einstein's week-long visit in Palestine, see Clark, *Einstein*, pp. 392–96. An indication of Einstein's involvement in the university is his agreement to be feted at a fund-raising affair sponsored by the Singapore Jewish community when his ship anchored in Singapore en route from Japan to Egypt.
12. Leo Kohn to Andor Fodor, November 10, 1922, Weizmann Papers; Lavsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–24.

13. Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 52–53; Lavsky, “Sheva shnot yesod,” pp. 16–24. Lavsky discusses the conflicts between Weizmann over the question of governance of the science institutes that were to be the basis of a medical school. The appointment of Fodor was made by Weizmann without consulting the American committee as had been agreed. Negotiations with Fodor were underway by November 1922 and his appointment went into effect in January 1923 (Leo Kohn, secretary of the university committee, to Fodor, November 10, 1922, Weizmann Archives).

14. *Yediot ha-mahon l'madaey ha-yahadut*, #1 (1925): 10–12, 18; *Jewish Chronicle*, January 2, 1925: 7; *New Palestine*, December 26, 1924: 448. For an eye-witness account of the opening by an American student, see Isidore B. Hoffman, “In the Beginning, From A Student’s Notebook,” in *New Palestine*, March 27, 1925: 345–45.

15. Quoted by Myers, *Re-Inventing*, p. 40. Myers has used the Hebrew text which appeared in *Yediot ha-machon l'madaey ha-yahadut*, Vol. 1, Jerusalem 1925. The address appears in Magnes, *Addresses by the Chancellor of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem, 1936), pp. 1–8, where the quotation has been considerably muted.

16. Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 40–61; Lavsky traces in detail the discussions of the institutional place of Jewish studies in the university and the plans that were drawn up in London during this period (“Sheva shnot yesod,” pp. 27–39).

17. Magnes offered the example at a joint meeting of the different committees that were supporting the establishment of an Institute of Jewish Studies. The meeting took place in London on July 21, 1924 (Memorandum of Meeting, July 1924, Warburg Papers, Box 222, Institute of Jewish Studies). Magnes sent a copy to Warburg who asked Cyrus Adler to comment on it. Adler wrote: “If Greek and the history of Greek civilization are to be studied from the point of view of the Jewish contact with Greek civilization, a totally incorrect perspective would be obtained.” Those trained according to this method would “be so narrow and one-sided” they would never attain a place in the scholarly world” (Ira Robinson, ed., *Cyrus Adler, Selected Letters* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985], p. 102).

18. Magnes, *Addresses*, pp. 2–8; *Yediot ha-mahon l'madaey ha-yahadut*, #1, *passim*.

19. David Biale, “The Idea of a Jewish University,” in *Like All the Nations? The Life and Legacy of Judah L. Magnes*, edited by William M. Brinner and Moses Rischin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), pp. 134–135.

20. The other members were Norman Bentwich, the attorney general of the Mandatory government, Dr. Leo Meier, an Arabist, Prof. Hayim Pick, an Assyriologist and Mizrahi leader, Prof. Otto Warburg, a botanist and director of the agricultural research station in Rehovot, and Shlomo Ginzberg who had served as the secretary of the London committee and was acting as liaison person for the London committee in Palestine (“Ha-va-ada ha-zmanit liftikhat makhleket maadey ha-ruah lemikhlah ha-ivrit biyerushalayim,” Nov. 26, 1922, Weizmann Archives). At this meeting and in a letter addressed to the Zionist executive in London, the point was stressed that “a full university was needed in which the humanities will occupy a central place and which will command the respect not merely of Jews” and not become another rabbinical seminary.

21. The Jerusalem Committee for the Establishment of an Arts Faculty in Jerusalem, September 9, 1923 (Weizmann Papers). For a detailed account of the politics connected with the preliminary planning of the Institute see Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 46–50 and Lavsky, “Sheva shnot yesod,” 27–39.

22. Magnes to Weizmann, May 25, 1913 in *Dissenter in Zion: From the Writings of Judah L. Magnes*, edited by Arthur A. Goren (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1908), pp. 136–38. After reading the Magnes-Weizmann correspondence, Israel Friedlaender commented that Jewish Palestine was not yet mature enough to produce an authentic Jewish culture. Therefore it would be wise to begin with branches of knowledge “which do not at once intrude into the profoundest recesses of our slumbering national genius” (Friedlaender to Magnes, December 16, 1913, Magnes Papers).

23. Judah L. Magnes to Felix Warburg, April 11, 1924, Felix M. Warburg Collection, Box #220, American Jewish Archive.

24. Ibid., Box 220, American Jewish Archive.

25. Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 52–53; Summary of Statement made by Judah L. Magnes at London Meeting (July 21, 1924), Felix M. Warburg Collection; Judah L. Magnes to Felix M. Warburg, July 22, 1924, Box 222, American Jewish Archives.

26. Myers, op. cit., pp. 55–56; David Biale, op. cit., p. 133; Lavsky, op. cit., pp. 32–37. Also see Myers' contribution to this symposium, "A New Scholarly Colony."

27. Magnes to Weizmann, May 25, 1913, in Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 136–38; Magnes to Warburg, April 11, 1924, Felix Warburg Collection, Box 220. When informed by Magnes of the gift, Weizmann cabled: "Rejoice hear Warburg's relation to University. Implore you see his donation which earmarked Jewish faculty go general University committee and not complicate matters by appointment new committee which might interfere with work already progressing stop you and another American will serve as Trustees together with Mond, Rothschild, myself and others" (April 14, 1924, Weizmann Papers).

28. Magnes to Weizmann, April 30, 1924, Weizmann Papers.

29. M. D. Eder to Judah L. Magnes, July 16, 1925, M. D. Eder to Felix M. Warburg, July 4, 1925, Felix M. Warburg Collection, Box 222, American Jewish Archives.

30. In addition to the wretched personal relations between members of the natural science departments—accusations of plagiarism, despotism, exploitation of junior staff, and incompetence—basic differences in scientific outlook exacerbated matters. The best known case was that of Professor Israel Kligler, an American-trained bacteriologist, who established a department of hygiene (i.e., public health). Funding from the Joint Distribution Committee and Hadassah for malaria prevention enabled Kligler to build the largest department in the sciences. The European-trained scientists considered him "scientifically unimportant . . . hardly known in the German professional publications." It was claimed that he had Magnes' ear on all matters pertaining to the sciences. (See especially Dr. Felix Danzinger to Albert Einstein, Oct. 4, 1927, Einstein Papers, 36–969. I appreciate Prof. Mendelsohn's help in deciphering the German script.) Einstein and Weizmann held Magnes responsible for what they considered to be the disastrous situation in the sciences. The data for a study of this important subject is most accessible in *Report of the Survey Committee of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (London, 1934) and J. L. Magnes, *Reply to the Report of the Survey Committee of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1934).

31. Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 58–61; Magnes to Warburg, August 20, 1925, Felix Warburg Collection, Box 222; Einstein to Magnes, Sept. 9, 1925, Albert Einstein Papers, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, File 36 895. Magnes had completed a successful fund-raising trip to the United States in May in the course of which he described the short- and long-term needs of the University. Einstein's admonition not to present a budget was totally unrealistic in Magnes' mind.

32. Ahad Ha'Am, C. N. Bialik, J. L. Magnes to Dr. M. D. Eder, July 28, 1925, Felix M. Warburg Collection, Box 222, American Jewish Archives.

33. Myers, *Re-Inventing*, pp. 60–61.

34. Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University, 12 April 1925 at Tel Aviv, Felix Warburg Papers, Box 222.

35. Yigal Elam, *Ha-sohnut ha-yehudit: shanim rishonot, 1919–1931* [*The Jewish Agency: Formative Years, 1919–1931*] (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 65–66.

36. Marshall to Weizmann, May 28, 1926, in *Louis Marshall, Champion of Liberty: Selected Papers and Addresses*, edited by Charles Reznikoff (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957), Vol. 1, pp. 759–60. The remark comes at the end of a twelve-page letter of grievances against the American Zionists in particular.

37. Judah Magnes to Felix Warburg, July 29, 1925, Felix M. Warburg Collection, Box 222; [Judah Magnes] Notes on the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University, Munich, Sept. 23, 24, 1925, in Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 247–248; Judah Magnes to Felix Warburg, April 28, 1929, ibid., pp. 274–275; Chaim Weizmann to Judah L. Magnes, Oct. 12, 1925, in *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Joshua Freundlich, Vol. 12 (series A), p. 422; Albert Einstein to Felix Warburg, January 1, 1926, Felix M. Warburg Papers, Box 237. The Minutes Einstein considered *bona fide* stated that the presidium with executive authority was to be located in London.

38. Chaim Weizmann to Judah Magnes, October 12, 1925, in *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Joshua Freundlich, Vol. XII (series A), (New Brunswick, 1977), 418–423; Judah L. Magnes, to Chaim Weizmann, Oct. 30, 1925, Warburg Papers, Box 222, File: Hebrew University, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati; Chaim Weizmann to Judah Magnes, Dec. 15, 1925, *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, XII, 454–457.

39. See Elam, *The Jewish Agency*, pp. 72–97; Louis Marshall to Emanuel Neuman, December 22, 1925, in *Louis Marshall*, Vol. 2, pp. 749–750; to Chaim Weizmann, May 28, 1926, in *ibid.*, pp. 750–760; Chaim Weizmann to Hirsch Peretz Chajes, June 30, 1925, in *The Letters of Chaim Weizmann*, ed. Freundlich, XII, p. 372.

40. Magnes to Weizmann, Oct. 5, 1926, in *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Goren, pp. 257–260. As early as April, Magnes and Weizmann sent a joint cable from Jerusalem to Louis Marshall: “After extended conversation are both convinced Palestine upbuilding, including University, dependent upon united front. We are ready to bring this about as expressed in Agency projected. Cable your attitude and intention. Similar telegram sent Warburg” (Freundlich, ed., *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, Vol. XIII, p. 2).

41. Chaim Weizmann to Louis Marshall, May 13, 1926, in *Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Pinhas Ofer (New Brunswick, 1978), XIII (Series A), pp. 26–32. Chaim Weizmann to Albert Einstein, May 9, 1926 and July 9, 1926 in *ibid.*, pp. 16–17, 66–67.

42. Judah Magnes to Felix Warburg, April 28, 1929, in Goren, *Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 273–275.

43. Naomi W Cohen, *The Years After the Riots: American Responses to the Palestine Crisis of 1929–1930* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), *passim*.

44. Judah Magnes to Norman Bentwich, Sept. 13, 1929, Magnes Papers, File 584. See Magnes’ more dispassionate discussion in his letter to Weizmann in response to the latter’s telephone call soliciting his views. Judah Magnes to Chaim Weizmann, Sept. 7, 1929 in *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Goren, pp. 276–278.

45. Judah L. Magnes, *Like All the Nations?* (Jerusalem: Weiss Press, 1930), p. 1; Magnes, *Addresses by the Chancellor of the Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1936), pp. 102–103.

46. *New York Times*, Nov. 19, 1929: 10; Weizmann to Alfred Landsberg, Nov. 13, 1929, Weizmann to Albert Einstein, Nov. 16, 1929, and Weizmann to Robert Weltsch, Nov. 28, 1929, in *Letters of Chaim Weizmann*, edited by Camillo Dresner, Vol. 14 (New Brunswick, NJ (1978), pp. 68–69, 84–85, 120–121.

47. Arthur A. Goren, ed., *Dissenter in Zion*, pp. 34–35, 204–205; Cyrus Adler to Judah Magnes, March 5, 1930 in *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters*, edited by Ira Robinson (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985), Vol. 2, p. 187.

48. Journal: The University Opening, March 22, 1925, in *Dissenter in Zion*, ed. Goren, p. 231.

49. Arthur A. Goren, in E. Miller Budick, Arthur Goren, and Shlomo Slonim, eds., “The Wider Pulpit: Judah L. Magnes and the Politics of Morality,” *Studies in American Civilization*, Vol. 32 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1987), pp. 116–120; Magnes, *Addresses by the Chancellor*, pp. 270, 284.

LEORA B. SMITH

Water

In this simple land
where mixed up words
spill out of split rocks
and water only comes
from the faucet,

I walk on straight roads
and watch my life
wander.

Unfolding

Poetry only exists
on shards of paper,

scratched on envelopes
and half pieces
from my notebook.

on the wrong side
of theater tickets
and receipts,

crumpled in my mind
unfolding
on napkins never neat,
words, organizing themselves.

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Pat Buchanan and the Jews

EDWARD S. SHAPIRO

OF ALL CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POLITICAL FIGURES, few are viewed so negatively by Jews as Patrick J. Buchanan.¹ This is not merely because of the columnist's position on such matters as immigration, multiculturalism, the "cultural war," church-state relations, foreign trade, and overseas military involvements. What impresses Jews, rather, are his attitude toward the Holocaust, Israel, and his Jewish critics. They believe his comments on these topics reflect more than foolishness, stubbornness, an excessively polemical and pugnacious style, and what William F. Buckley, Jr. described as "clumsy forensic manners," an attraction "to mischievous generalizations," and "an iconoclastic temperament." They are, Jews believe, the rantings of an anti-Semite.²

It is doubtful that a man as politically experienced and astute as Buchanan ever believed that he would become the Republican Party's nominee for President. Rather, as he has indicated on several occasions, his ultimate objective has been to control the American conservative movement. The tensions between Buchanan and American Jews are thus part of a larger story—the quarter of a century long struggle between "neo-conservatives" and "paleo-conservatives" over the future of American conservatism.

Neo-conservative intellectuals view Buchanan with contempt. Norman Podhoretz, former editor of *Commentary*, the leading neo-conservative publication and now its Editor-at-Large, wrote that Buchanan was part of a conservative faction which "would release into the political air the viruses of xenophobia and nativism, and the derivative diseases of anti-Semitism and old fashioned racism." For Podhoretz, Buchanan has put the conservative movement at risk. "Having been carried triumphantly into the mainstream by Ronald Reagan," a Buchanan political victory would drag the movement "back into a marginal sectarian status with very little appeal to anyone outside its own fever swamps."³

Buchanan, for his part, is a longtime opponent of the neo-conservatives, and his leading supporters have been drawn from the ranks of the paleo-conservatives. Since the emergence of neo-conservatism—a name and movement defined by Irving Kristol in the 1960s—paleo-conservatives have claimed that the neo-conservatives were not true conservatives. They were simply

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liberals who, without relinquishing their liberal mindset, had moved to the right as a result of the excesses of the Great Society and the perilous status of the state of Israel. Russell Kirk, the leading traditionalist conservative intellectual, described the neo-conservatives as “a little sect, distrusted and reproached by what we may call mainline conservatives.” Buchanan agreed. The tactics of the neo-conservatives, “including the smearing of opponents as racists, nativists, fascists, and anti-Semites—left many conservatives wondering if we hadn’t made a terrible mistake when we brought these ideological vagrants in off the street and gave them a warm place by the fire,” he wrote in 1991. “Like the fleas who conclude they are steering the dog, their relationship to the movement has always been parasitical.”⁴

The differences between the paleo-conservatives and the neo-conservatives involved four major areas. The first was religion. Many of the paleo-cons, including Buchanan, had come to conservatism through religion, and they identified conservatism with the values and institutions of Christendom. While many of the prominent Jewish neo-conservatives recognized the importance of religion, few were religious themselves. If the major division in the world for the neo-cons was between freedom and tyranny, for the paleo-cons it was between naturalism and religion.

Buchanan and other paleos were correct that neo-conservatism embodied the spirit of modernism. The neo-cons, in fact, did not long for a pre-modern golden age, nor were they hostile to science, capitalism, the experimental outlook, individualism, and secularism. Adam Meyerson, a neo-conservative intellectual affiliated with the Heritage Foundation, noted that neo-conservatives “have a sense of progress” and “welcome more than we fear advances in technology.” Such statements confirmed the paleo-conservative belief that the neo-conservatives were essentially utilitarians with little sense of a transcendent religious and moral order or of the philosophical and theological underpinnings of traditional conservatism.⁵

The second area of conflict between the paleo-cons and the neo-cons concerned the welfare state. The neo-cons were not philosophically opposed to the welfare state, although they believed that it had gone too far during the 1960s. Neo-conservatives such as Kristol supported a welfare state purged of paternalism and statism. For the neo-conservatives, modern liberalism did not work; for the paleo-conservatives, it was philosophically wrong. Paul Gottfried, a paleo-conservative historian, accused the neo-conservatives of being statist. “Their hearts, in most cases, are with the Left, even if their expense accounts come from the Right.”⁶

The third area of conflict between the neo-cons and the paleo-cons was the latter’s belief that, after laboring for decades in the vineyards of conservatism, they had been cruelly thrust aside by the neo-cons during the conservative ascendancy of the 1980s. As the historian Clyde Wilson complained in 1986, “Our estate has been taken over by an impostor, just as we were about to inherit.” Buchanan agreed. Supposedly the neo-conservatives had captured

the major conservative foundations, had blacklisted their paleo-conservative rivals, had received the best jobs within the Reagan administration, and, perhaps most important, had been accepted by the general public as the authentic voice of modern American conservatism. Traditional conservatives, Buchanan declared in May, 1991, would have to take their movement back from the neo-conservatives, "the ex-liberals, socialists, and Trotskyists who signed on in the name of anti-communism and now control our foundations and set the limits of permissible dissent."⁷

The final area of contention between the paleo- and the neo-cons concerned foreign policy. Buchanan and his fellow paleos were essentially isolationists. They rejected President Bush's "new world order," were skeptical of foreign aid, the World Bank, and the United Nations, and dissented from the moralistic thrust of neo-conservative foreign policy pronouncements. The paleos were particularly antagonistic to proposals by the neo-conservatives that Washington should seek to spread democracy throughout the world. This worship of democracy, Buchanan said in May, 1991, was "liberal idolatry masquerading as conservative orthodoxy," and he called the National Endowment for Democracy, a government agency which had been strongly supported by neo-conservatives, the "Comintern of the neo-conservatives." By contrast, Buchanan described himself as a "neo-isolationist." He favored the ending of foreign aid, the removal of the United Nations from the United States, the closing of the World Bank, the imposition of high tariffs, and the reduction or ending of immigration, both legal and illegal. In his famous article "America First—and Second, and Third," published, interestingly enough, in Kristol's *The National Interest*, Buchanan called for a new nationalist and isolationist foreign policy purged of neo-conservative "globaloney."⁸

Buchanan's opposition to Desert Shield and Desert Storm was a logical outgrowth of his isolationism and the struggle within the conservative movement. The war against Iraq, he contended, was an example of neo-conservative foreign policy in action, and he referred to defenders of Bush's Persian Gulf policy as "neo-conservatives." Buchanan claimed that the major interest of the neo-conservatives had always been Israel. "This *Commentary* crowd . . . didn't come around to our way of thinking," he told conservatives in 1983, "until the Soviet threat to Israel became apparent." His facts were wrong, for *Commentary* had been strongly anti-communist since its founding shortly after World War II.⁹

Adding to the tension between Buchanan and his neo-conservative critics has been the columnist's pugnacious personality and his take-no-prisoners rhetorical style. His later years are of a piece with his youth. His autobiography, *Right From the Beginning*, recounts his father's efforts to teach his seven sons to box and Pat's frequent fist fights and run-ins with the law while growing up in Washington, D.C. It was from his father that Buchanan inherited what he called "my combative proclivities." While Buchanan can be quite charming in private, his scrappy public posture has become an important

element in his political image, and he glories in the epithet, “pit bull of the Right.” He admires such discredited figures as Joe McCarthy and Spiro Agnew because they were brawlers. In 1974, Buchanan was one of the most vigorous defenders of Richard Nixon during the Watergate crisis, not because he believed the President was innocent but because when “they” come for one of “us” there can be only one possible response: lock and load.

Buchanan grew up in a devout Roman Catholic family, attended a Washington parochial elementary school and then Gonzaga High School, the local Jesuit high school, and graduated from Georgetown University, another Jesuit institution, in 1961. Georgetown’s undergraduates were required to take eight courses in metaphysics, logic, and natural theology, all, of course, taught from a Thomist and Jesuit perspective. Here they learned that the greatest evils facing America were secular humanism and ethical relativism. In the 1950s, Roman Catholicism was moving into the American cultural and intellectual mainstream as thinkers like Jacques Maritain, Thomas Merton, Christopher Dawson, Graham Greene, and Flannery O’Connor were making an impact. With the struggle against atheistic communism at its height, the fifties was an auspicious time for Catholics to demonstrate their Americanness and to escape from their self-imposed intellectual ghetto. Buchanan recounts in his autobiography that he was taught by the nuns in parochial school that “America was God’s country; there was no conflict then between nation and church.” In fact, Catholics came to view themselves as the defenders of what was best in the American political tradition. John Courtney Murray and other Catholic intellectuals argued that American democracy itself was ultimately derived from the Catholic conception of natural law, and they elevated the seventeenth-century Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine and other Catholic political thinkers into the ranks of Locke, Trenchard, and Gordon as formative influences on the American Revolution and Constitution.¹⁰

The conservative intellectual movement, which emerged in the 1950s, had a major effect on Buchanan’s thought. Russell Kirk’s *The Conservative Mind* was published in 1954, while Buchanan was a junior in high school; and the first issue of William F. Buckley, Jr.’s the *National Review* appeared the next year. Catholics such as Buckley, Francis Graham Wilson, John Lukacs, and Ross Hoffman comprised a disproportionate number of America’s most influential conservative intellectuals. Communism, the major enemy of their church, was now also the major enemy of the United States. Catholic conservatives believed they were better equipped intellectually than other Americans to oppose the naturalism, pragmatism, ethical relativism, and secular liberalism sapping America’s will to resist communism.¹¹

Buchanan recalled the impact that the *National Review* had on him. “My reaction was not unlike that of John Keats, ‘On first Looking into Chapman’s Homer,’” he wrote. “Here was stated, with style and grace, but especially with fire and wit, the political philosophy in which I, too, believed. . . . For us, what *National Review* did was take the word ‘conservatism,’ then a synonym for stuffy

orthodoxy, Republican stand-pat-ism and economic self-interest, and convert it into the snapping pennant of a fighting faith.”¹²

Buchanan’s politics were an extension of his father’s. Pop Buchanan had been an ardent America Firster prior to World War II, and the nativism and isolationism which permeated the America First movement were also to pervade his son’s politics. The elder Buchanan’s greatest political heroes were Francisco Franco, Charles Lindbergh, Douglas MacArthur, Westbrook Pegler, and Joe McCarthy, and these would also be included among Pat’s heroes as well. Age did not mellow the conservative Catholicism which Buchanan inherited from his family. His Catholicism would remain pre-Vatican II, and he has only contempt for the ecumenical and liberalizing tendencies released in the church during the 1960s, and for their ecclesiastical advocates.¹³

The charge that Buchanan was an anti-Semite was first widely expressed following comments he made in August, 1990 on television after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He then claimed that the only proponents of war with Iraq were the Israeli defense ministry and its American “amen corner.” “The Israelis want this war desperately because they want the United States to destroy the Iraqi war machine,” Buchanan claimed. “They want us to finish them off. They don’t care about our relations with the Arab world.” A few weeks later, he singled out as members of the amen corner four Jews: Henry Kissinger, the former Secretary of State, Richard Perle, a well-known critic of arms control agreements with the Soviet Union and a Defense Department official, Richard Krauthammer, a prominent neo-conservative commentator on foreign affairs, and Abe Rosenthal, a columnist for the *New York Times*. This was patent nonsense. None of the leading advocates for Desert Shield or Desert Storm within the Bush administration were Jews, and Desert Shield and Desert Storm had widespread support throughout the country. Also, some of the Arab states, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and most American conservatives favored the effort to eject Iraq from Kuwait and the dispatching of American military forces to Saudi Arabia. At the same time, Buchanan predicted that the casualties in any war with Iraq would have such names as McAllister, Murphy, Gonzales, and Leroy Brown. Absent from this list were Cohen, Goldberg, or Levy. Rosenthal responded by accusing Buchanan of propagating a modern version of the infamous medieval “blood libel” which charged that Jews sacrificed the blood of Christians during Passover.¹⁴

In March, 1992, Buchanan had replied to a group of Jewish hecklers while campaigning in Georgia’s Republican presidential primary that he was speaking to “a rally of Americans, by Americans, and for the good Old U.S.A.” The clear implication was that his Jewish critics were un-American, had no concern for the national interest of the United States, and were only interested in the welfare of Israel. Jewish spokesmen accused Buchanan of seeking to resurrect the old anti-Semitic canard of dual loyalty.¹⁵

Buchanan’s attitude toward Israel was driven by the same considerations of *real politik*, anti-communism, isolationism, and fear of increased executive

authority which motivated his opposition to a war with Iraq. During the 1970s and early 1980s, he praised Israel as a staunch ally of the United States in the struggle against communism and radicalism. The 1976 Israeli raid on Entebbe, he wrote, "was done in the noblest of causes—the rescue of unarmed civilians from cutthroats and thugs." Israel, Buchanan claimed on the occasion of the state's thirty-fifth anniversary, was "a tough, resourceful energetic nation, an offspring of the West, a strategic asset to the West, whose current struggle merits sympathy and support, not only because it mirrors our own, but because its resolution will likely presage the outcome of our own."¹⁶

Such praise, however, became less frequent after 1983. Increasingly Buchanan questioned whether American support of Israel was in the national interest. A March 13, 1991 Buchanan column asserted that Israel was "a strategic albatross draped around the neck of the United States." And in a column six months later he commended Bush's opposition to loan guarantees to Israel. Even if Bush's veto of these guarantees was overridden, Buchanan wrote, "he will have won high marks for his courage, and exposed Congress for what it has become, a Parliament of Whores incapable of standing up for U.S. national interests, if AIPAC is on the other line."¹⁷

Even more troubling to Jews than Buchanan's attitude toward Israel were his statements regarding the Holocaust. When considered alongside his comments regarding Israel and her Jewish supporters, these comments appeared to be sinister rather than merely eccentric and provocative. In 1985, Buchanan was director of the White House communications office when President Reagan announced that his upcoming trip to Germany would include a wreath-laying ceremony at a military cemetery in Bitburg. It was soon revealed that the cemetery included the graves of veterans of the SS. Reagan then stated that the German soldiers buried at Bitburg were as much victims of the Nazi regime as the inmates of the concentration camps. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, Buchanan was responsible for Reagan's statement.¹⁸

A barrage of criticism ensued after Reagan's itinerary was announced, and many begged Reagan to drop the Bitburg visit. Buchanan, however, was a vigorous opponent of any revision in the President's itinerary. He seemed oblivious to the reasons why Americans would be outraged by a ceremony at Bitburg and why they sought to keep alive the memories of Nazi atrocities more than four decades after the end of World War II. He wondered why there was not the same concern with atrocities committed by the communist states. "To what end," he asked, "all this wallowing in the atrocities of a dead regime when there is scarcely a peep of protest over the prison camps, the labor camps, the concentration camps operating now in China and Siberia, in Cuba and South Vietnam?" Given the state of American public opinion at the time, this was a bizarre response. Certainly he could not have been unaware of the constant criticism of China, Cuba, the Soviet Union, and South Vietnam during the 1980s for their treatment of political dissidents.¹⁹

During the 1930s, the isolationist Old Right had argued that the most fundamental challenge facing the United States was not Nazi Germany but the Soviet Union. While the Old Right was not sympathetic to National Socialism, many of its spokesmen believed Germany was providing a valuable service by checking Soviet expansionism. Buchanan's admiration for the Old Right helps explain his attitude toward the Holocaust. While he is not a Holocaust denier, he has played down its significance when compared with, say, the struggle against communism. He has frequently pointed out that there seemed to be a double-standard at work. Accused Nazis were assumed guilty until proven innocent, while accused communists were assumed innocent until proven guilty. "There is political cowardice so thick you can cut it with a knife," he remarked once when discussing his defense of accused Nazi war criminals. "If these guys were accused of being communist spies on behalf of the Soviet Union in World War II . . . there would be ten thousand reporters working on their behalf demanding a hearing." Buchanan also believed that the evidence against accused Nazi war criminals was necessarily tainted because it came from Soviet archives. Almost by definition, any target of the Soviet Union must have some redeeming value.²⁰

Buchanan repeatedly claimed that accused Nazi war criminals such as John Demjanjuk were victims of a frame-up. The Demjanjuk case, he wrote, was "an official lynching choreographed by the KGB." In March, 1989, Buchanan criticized the ostracizing of Kurt Waldheim for his reputed wartime activities. He even questioned whether the gas chambers at Treblinka could have killed as many persons as scholars claimed. His proof for this was an incident in a Washington, D.C. tunnel in which a train broke down and the passengers survived despite noxious fumes supposedly similar to those at Treblinka. Such a comparison was easily refuted by historians and chemists who pointed to the obvious differences between the two cases. Buchanan further claimed that a so-called "Holocaust Survivor Syndrome" involving "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics" was partially responsible for this continual harping on the sins of the Nazis, as if their sins did not speak for themselves. Buchanan's newspaper column also vigorously defended the presence of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, and bitterly attacked those Catholics opposed to it, including New York's Cardinal O'Connor, for seeking to appease Jews over this issue.²¹

All of this was too much for the American Jewish establishment. The American Jewish Congress, for example, described Buchanan as "genuine and authentic an anti-Semite as they come." Yet Buchanan has vigorously denied that he is anti-Semitic, and he has claimed that the accusation of anti-Semitism was being used by rivals within the conservative movement to discredit him and like-minded paleo-conservatives. Those who know Buchanan best, including fellow Washington journalists Jack Germond, Al Hunt, and Mark Shields, have denied that Buchanan is anti-Semitic, and certainly there was nothing in Buchanan's career prior to 1985 to indicate otherwise. His autobi-

ography is free of anti-Semitic musings, and its scattered references to Jews and Israel are complimentary. Here he noted the admiration of his father, a prominent Washington, D.C. accountant, for the city's Jewish entrepreneurs, some of whom were his father's clients. Buchanan also stated in his memoir that he agreed with the American commitment to the survival of Israel.²² The question remains: In what sense of the word is Buchanan an anti-Semite and, if so, what is the nature of his anti-Semitism? And to what extent is it a personal response or a reflex of paleo-conservatism?

Buchanan's relationship with Jews has always been cordial, and from childhood he has had close friendships with Jews. There is no evidence that he believes Jews as individuals to be different from others. In the face of accusations of anti-Semitism directed at Buchanan by *Commentary*, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, and even Bill Buckley, his Jewish conservative supporters, including Allan H. Ryskind, Paul Gottfried, and Murray Rothbard, have continually denied that Buchanan is an anti-Semite. If Buchanan is an anti-Semite, and there is some doubt as to that, it is not because he finds Jews as individuals to be undesirable. Rather, it is because Buchanan has taken positions which have conflicted with Jewish interests, and he has done so in a manner which has led fair-minded persons to conclude that he has a problem when it comes to matters of Jewish concern.

Even if Buchanan could not be charged personally with anti-Semitism, Jews, as well as other Americans, are wise to oppose him. He has assumed leadership of a conservative faction permeated with xenophobia, isolationism, and a rancor directed at ethnic and cultural minorities. His is a politics of fear which appeals to estranged Americans nursing economic and cultural grievances, but it does not provide any sensible answers to alleviate their problems. Conservatives, in particular, have a further reason for distancing themselves from Buchanan since his brand of conservatism marginalizes it. As the conservative writer David Frum asked, "How deeply into kookery can a man who claims to speak for conservatism go before other conservatives are obliged to repudiate him?" Irving Kristol noted correctly that should Buchanan be successful in taking over the conservative movement, it will have suffered "its greatest defeat since the election of 1964." The results of the Republican primaries of 1996 indicates that this is not likely to occur.²³

NOTES

1. This essay was originally presented as a paper at the December, 1995, meeting of the Association of Jewish Studies in Boston.
2. William F. Buckley, Jr., *In Search of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Continuum, 1992), pp. 29, 44.
3. Norman Podhoretz, "Buchanan and the Conservative Crackup," *Commentary* 93 (May 1992): 34.
4. Jacob Weisberg, "Hunter Gatherers," *New Republic* 205 (2 September 1991): 14; John Ehrman, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 186; Fred Barnes, "Heir Apparent," *New Republic* 206 (30 March 1992): 20.

5. R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., *The Conservative Crack-Up* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), pp. 979–98.
6. Paul Gottfried, “Notes on Neoconservatism,” *World and I* 1 (September 1986): 578.
7. Clyde Wilson, “The Conservative Identity,” *Intercollegiate Review* 21 (Spring 1986): 6–7; David Frum, *Dead Right* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 125.
8. Gary Dorien, *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture, and the War of Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), p. 342; Patrick J. Buchanan, “America First—and Second and Third,” *National Interest* #19 (Spring 1990): 77ff.
9. Daniel Bell, “Our Country - 1984,” *Partisan Review* 51 (1984): 630.
10. Patrick J. Buchanan, *Right From the Beginning* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), p. 63.
11. The role of Catholics in the post-World War II American conservative movement is clearly and cogently told in Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993).
12. Buchanan, *Right From the Beginning* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1988), pp. 218, 221.
13. Charles Lane, “Daddy’s Boy,” *New Republic* 214 (22 January 1996): 15–25.
14. Joshua Muravchik, “Patrick J. Buchanan and the Jews,” *Commentary* 91 (January 1991): 29–30; Abe Rosenthal, “Forgive Them Not,” *New York Times*, 14 September 1990, sec. 1.
15. Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 232.
16. Allan H. Ryskind, letter to the editor, *Commentary* 91 (May 1992): 4–5; Anti-Defamation League Special Research Report, *From Columnist to Candidate: Pat Buchanan’s Religious War* (1992): 7–8.
17. Anti-Defamation League Special Research Report, *Anger on the Right: Pat Buchanan’s Venomous Crusade* (1991): 3–4.
18. Muravchik, “Buchanan and the Jews”: 33.
19. *From Columnist to Candidate*, p. 17.
20. Eric Alterman, “Semites and Anti-Semites: The Pat and Abe Show,” *Nation* 251 (5 November 1991): 520.
21. Jacob Weisberg, “The Heresies of Pat Buchanan,” *New Republic* 203 (22 October 1990): 26; Muravchik, “Buchanan and the Jews”: 33, 36.
22. Abraham H. Foxman, “Antisemitism in America: A View From the Defense,” in Jerome A. Chanes (ed.), *Antisemitism in America: Outspoken Experts Explore the Myths* (New York: Birch Lane Press, 1995), p. 331; Buchanan, *Right From the Beginning*, pp. 277–78.
23. David Frum, “The Conservative Bully Boy,” *American Spectator* 24 (July 1991): 14; Buckley, *In Search of Anti-Semitism*, pp. 125–27.

Vowels

Holes on the page
the eye picks up,
the ear opens to,
the *I* finds irresistible.

Wide mouth bass
drift on weeds
by the dam's breach.
A lake
in upper New York state,
a pond near Syracuse,
both yield their fish
to the lone fisherman
in autumn, his monofilament line
hissing and dipping over water.
"Watch the bowl the line makes
before fish strike," he calls,
seating worms on his hook.

Or, heather in fields
a purple glazed mist
the bagpiper walks through,
breaking stride
only for the boulder, his pipes
blowing for all Hell to hear.
Get out of there!

He touches her breast with his ear
as she cradles him now, against
an oval to break his heart
so she moans, or he does
touching her here.

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He made of the sound a conduit path,
a drumbeat to his heart, a traveling
and when it arrived he exploded and burned,
and fell ashes into the bass of it,
the flower.

So they begot music
and were saved.
And the ewe was in the thicket
well used, and the fish ground
in the mortar, and horseradish
and another year
turned.

Errata

In Edward Alexander's "Irving Howe and Secular Jewishness: An Elegy" (*JUDAISM*, Winter 1995), the editors incorrectly attributed the photograph of Edward Alexander and Irving Howe (p. 106). The photographer was in fact Sadie Alexander. We deeply regret the error.

The Recovered Self: Auschwitz and Autobiography

D. M E S H E R

Auschwitz and After. By CHARLOTTE DELBO, trans. Rosette C. Lamont. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Bridge of Sorrow, Bridge of Hope. By RIVA CHIRURG, trans. Arlene and Jerry Aviram, ed. Rebecca Camhi Fromer. Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1994.

The Dentist of Auschwitz. By BENJAMIN JACOBS. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995.

The Smell of Humans. By ERNO SZÉP, trans. John Bakti. New York: Central European University Press, 1994.

Varieties of Fear: Growing Up Jewish under Nazism and Communism. By PETER KENEZ. Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995.

LAWRENCE LANGER ONCE SUGGESTED THAT "ONE OF THE MANY TASKS OF HOLOCAUST criticism is to clarify the complex bond, in the minds of both author and audience, linking the oppression of history to the impressions of art."¹ Langer was discussing fictional works about the Holocaust, but with very little change similar points can be made about Holocaust autobiography: first, that we can and should distinguish between the "objective" truths of an historical account, and the "subjective" truths of a personal one; and second, that the linkage between historical information and personal narratives is a complex relationship in the minds of both writers and readers. These are problems, of course, for all autobiographical literature. But they raise particularly sensitive issues for Holocaust autobiographies, considering the enormity of the events discussed, the necessarily limited experience any one person could have of the total scope of those events, the impressionistic and therefore conventionally unreliable nature of such limited experience (especially when recalled over time and re-created in words), and finally the willingness of some to use such unavoidable limitations on autobiography in an effort to discredit and deny the very events that have been witnessed. One approach to Holocaust autobiographies, then, begins with a discussion of the author's use or avoidance of historical information to supplement personal knowledge. This distinction can be made most clearly between autobiographies that strive to communicate an accurate re-creation of an individual experience in historical terms, and those that attempt to recover the emotions and impressions of that experience as self-validating in themselves. "Recovered" autobiographies are often more literate in tone and content, while those stressing the accuracy of re-creation rely more on the external details of their story. Further, this distinction between "recovered" and

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“re-created” autobiographies can help shed light on several current problems in the study of Holocaust autobiographies.

Most of the works to be discussed here might be considered “recovered literature” of one sort or another, if only because they have been kept covered, delayed, or forgotten for years. Erno Szép, who died in 1953, was one of the most prominent poets in Hungary when he wrote and published *The Smell of Humans* in 1945, but Szép’s reputation languished under the Communists and the memoir, reprinted only in 1984, was not translated into English until now. Charlotte Delbo, who died in 1985, was a non-Jew sent to Auschwitz for anti-German activities in France. Like Szép, Delbo began her memoirs—three volumes collected as *Auschwitz and After*—soon after she was liberated. She finished the first volume, *None of Us Will Return*, in 1946, and then waited almost twenty years to publish it, in 1965. The next two volumes, *Useless Knowledge* and *The Measure of Our Days*, some of which was written in the post-war years, appeared in the early 1970s; the current edition is comprised of the first English translation of the second and third volume, and a new translation of the first volume. Like Delbo and many other Holocaust writers, Riva Chirurg waited to tell her story, despite a strong motivation to bear witness. “We, who survived the Holocaust, have needed the perspective of time in order to form the events of the past into a shape that can be transmitted to the world around us, a world that was unable to absorb what happened” (p. ix). Her memoir, *Bridge of Sorrow, Bridge of Hope*, was originally published in Hebrew in 1988. Similarly, Benjamin Jacobs began publicly retelling his Holocaust experiences only after a 1985 trip to central Europe, and produced his written account, *The Dentist of Auschwitz*, after a brush with cancer. Finally, Peter Kenez, an historian specializing in the Soviet Union, wrote *Varieties of Fear: Growing Up Jewish under Nazism and Communism* less as a Holocaust memoir than as a personal and professional exploration. “I acquired a consciousness of myself and the world around me during the days of the Nazis,” Kenez writes, “and maybe that explains why I have always been afraid of people” (p. 37).

These works can be distinguished in many ways of significance to the Holocaust: the author’s Jewish identity, age, gender, class, country of origin, and the level of suffering and personal obliteration experienced, to name a few. Ultimately, however, the broadest distinction can be made, even among these very diverse autobiographies, on the basis of the author’s relationship with his or her subject matter. It is not always true, as Joseph Sungolowsky has argued, that “autobiography is written in order to come to terms with oneself.”⁷² The autobiographies of presidential candidates, to take an obvious example, have more to do with self-promotion than self-knowledge. And Holocaust writers have a special compulsion to tell the truth, not about themselves, but about the horrible injustice they have suffered. The question to be asked of each work, then, is whether the impulse to bear witness is directed outwardly, toward providing the reader with an historically accurate account, or inwardly, toward recovery of personal experience.

Erno Szép’s memoir begins five days after the Nazi-supported Arrow Cross coup against a Horthy government wavering in its commitment to its German ally, when Szép and hundreds of other Jewish men—many of them elderly or sick, some among the richest and most important of Budapest’s citizens, and several with documents guaranteeing them the “protection” of a neutral government like

Sweden or Switzerland—were marched off to forced labor camps. Szép's volume recounts his experiences for nineteen days at such a camp.

Conditions at the brick factory serving as the camp barracks were extremely unpleasant, most of the forced-laborers were too old or infirm for the work, and their rations were insufficient to stave off hunger. But considering that nearly half a million Jews from outside Budapest had been deported to Auschwitz since the German occupation of Hungary in March, 1944 and that, after Szép and the others were marched out of town, the Arrow Cross began organizing ghettos in the capital and sending those Jews to death camps as well, the poet and his comrades might be considered fortunate. But such historical correlatives are never made in Szép's entirely subjective account. Indeed, Szép's provocative title, *The Smell of Humans*, though it may initially conjure up images of mass graves and crematoria smokestacks, in fact refers simply to the uncomfortably close quarters of the labor camp where some of Budapest's most privileged Jews, Szép among them, were forced to share the plight of their less successful brethren, with little regard to class or position.

The assimilated nature of Szép's social class is clear from his ironic comments that, in his Budapest apartment building, "actual Jews, that is officially of the Israelite denomination, were hard to find among the tenants of this yellow-starred house," and many of them "were anti-Semitic bigots (born Christians or converts of twenty years' standing) who would have nothing to do with Jews—that is, those Christians who had converted recently" (p. 22). Once at the camp, Szép was quick to rue the social consequences of close confinement with his admirers: "every minute some person would come up to introduce himself . . . good heavens, now I would have to say hello to all these folks as long as I lived" (p. 93). The lack of good breeding among the inmates seemed especially objectionable to Szép: "The comradely courtesies that we had been called on to observe, as you may see, had been forgotten. There were many ordinary types, the louder ones, and seedy-looking characters as well, who delighted in addressing those richer and better dressed in casual, informal language, while these latter gentlemen remained reserved, for the most. I must confess to not being ready to hobnob with everyone; it took eight or ten days to politely discourage those comrades who forced their attentions on me" (p. 116).

Szép had the good luck to experience only the early stages of the Holocaust: his internment in the camp was brief, and the conditions were relatively mild: the rations, for example, at first nearly inedible, became quite tasty once Zóltan Korányi, renowned chef at the Cafe Royal, began cooking for the camp. Szép and the others suffered, without question, but if their suffering was insufficient to erode the veneer of class consciousness, then it was surely less than necessary to strip away the layers of humanity and self-respect that were so often lost at least temporarily among survivors of the death camps. Szép's memoir has been historically recovered, but not personally; it is only an unpleasant anecdote, rather than a cataclysm of the soul.

Like Szép, Peter Kenez had relatively little experience of the Holocaust in Hungary. He was only six years old when, on March 19, 1944, the Germans occupied the country. At the time, Kenez lived with his parents in a suburb of Budapest, and his father commuted to work in the city. The day after the occupation, his father was stopped en route, taken to the internment camp at Kistarcsa and later deported; he died on the forced march that followed the liquidation of Auschwitz in January, 1945. Kenez himself may have been saved from a similar end by his mother's decision to

move to her in-laws in Budapest proper; Jews remaining in the suburb were not long afterwards forced into a ghetto, and then transported to Auschwitz—as were most Hungarian Jews outside the capital.

In outward appearance, Kenez remembers, “nothing much had changed” in Budapest. “People ate ice cream and stood in line to go to movies” (p. 21). But for Jews, there were important new restrictions: they were ordered to wear yellow stars, deprived of their businesses and professions, and forced to concentrate in selected buildings, though not yet in a ghetto. At one time, his grandparents’ five-room apartment was home to forty-two people, mostly relatives. When, on October 15, the Horthy government attempted to betray its German allies and withdraw from the war, “we, the Jews of Budapest, enjoyed a few hours of euphoria . . . for it seemed that we had survived the ordeal” (p. 28). But the Germans outmaneuvered Horthy, and Hungarian fascists, the Nyilas or Arrow Cross, seized power. The Jews of Budapest were rounded up and held for days, only to be released when pressure was brought on the Nyilas government by neutral states, and especially by Sweden’s representative, Raoul Wallenberg. These same states—Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Vatican—issued letters of protection to some 15,000 Hungarian Jews, including a friend of Kenez’s family who offered them asylum in his “protected” apartment. At the time, Kenez was ill with scarlet fever, yet his mother chose to leave him in the care of his grandmother and great-aunt, and move to the protected apartment. Ironically, the quarantine notice on his door “offered better protection than Wallenberg and the name of the Swedish government” (p. 32). In December, when even “protected” Jews were ordered into the ghetto, Kenez’s family returned to the apartment, “protected by our pink piece of paper on the door” (p. 33). In January, they were liberated by the Red Army.

Though Kenez subtitled his volume *Growing Up Jewish under Nazism and Communism*, the Nazi period of the book fills barely two chapters, and his experiences are rather mild compared with the fate of most Hungarian Jews. But Kenez had no quarantine notice that could save him from Communism in post-war Hungary, and most of the book focuses on a life of increasing disillusionment with the Soviet-imposed system. Nevertheless, Kenez offers comments about the conditions under which he lived, as well as about the autobiographical process, that are quite relevant to the discussion here. For example, unlike Jacobs, in particular, who seems to make a point of mentioning righteous Nazis and sadistic Jews, Kenez as a child perceived a more bifurcated world: “I saw only hatred and hostility. I thought that everyone wanted our deaths and that there was no escape” (p. 30). For the young Kenez, evil incarnate was not the Nazis, but the young man who threw red paprika into the face of an elderly woman as the Jews of his building were being led away. “Up until that afternoon, evil was something abstract to me: the government passed cruel laws and Hungarian and German Nazis threatened our lives for reasons I could not understand. Even the Nyilas marchers were faceless enemies. The viciousness of that young man was something different: it was one human being causing intentional harm to another” (p. 29).

Especially in the early chapters, recalling himself as a young child during the war, Kenez—who escaped from Hungary in 1956, and is now a professor of history at the University of California at Santa Cruz—is conscious of the problem of neutralizing his mature knowledge in order to re-create his younger self. At one point, for example, Kenez writes, “I am trying now to put out of my mind

everything that I learned later, but it is impossible" (p. 26). Even that effort is exceptional for Kenez, and for Benjamin Jacobs, as well: both writers seem to believe that recreating historical detail is of greater importance than recovering personal impressions, and they both frequently add information that would have been unavailable to themselves at the time.

In Benjamin Jacobs' *The Dentist of Auschwitz*, the dentist in question is not the infamous Josef Mengele, but the author himself, who served as dentist in the Fürstengrube subcamp of Buna, Auschwitz III. Bronek Jakubowicz, as he was then known, was first transported along with his father and 165 other Jewish men and boys from the Polish *shtetl* of Dobra, in May, 1941, to the Steineck labor camp, near Poznan; he was twenty-one years old and, in some ways, enjoyed incredible luck. Realizing that the food rations at Steineck were insufficient, for example, Jacobs talked the Polish guard into letting his group buy their own bread each morning on the way to the worksite as they passed a bakery. That same guard came with them to Gutenbrunn, and took Jacobs on bicycle excursions in the area; on one such trip, Jacobs was reunited with his brother, working at a neighboring labor camp; on several others, he visited a camp for Jewish women, offering them his services as a dentist, and carried messages back and forth from relatives in Gutenbrunn. Most incredibly, on one of his first days bearing water at Steineck, he encountered a group of young Polish girls at the stream, and fell in love with one of them. Zosia and Jacobs enjoyed their almost daily clandestine outdoor lunch-time meetings even after he began working in the office. Zosia offered him not only her love, but regular food packets, which he shared with his father. The affair, and the food supply, continued at regular intervals after Jacobs was transferred to Gutenbrunn; he simply walked out of the camp to have sex with Zosia in the woods nearby and, though on one occasion he was beaten by roving Polish youths, the guards at Gutenbrunn never stopped him or sent Zosia away. At one point Zosia's father came with her, offering to hide Jacobs and his father if they would run away, but Jacobs rejected the offer, fearing the confinement of being hidden for months in a cellar more than the conditions at Gutenbrunn; by the time he understood the consequences of that missed opportunity, it was too late for Jacobs to escape: the camp was closed, the healthy among the remaining inmates were transported to Auschwitz, and the others murdered.

Jacobs arrived at Auschwitz in August, 1943. Though his box of dental tools was taken from him as he got off the train, Jacobs' luck continued even in Auschwitz: he managed to pull his father, who had been selected for death, into the line of the living during a disturbance; and after only a short while at Auschwitz proper, Jacobs, his brother, and his father were among those sent to the labor camp at Fürstengrube, about sixteen kilometers away, to mine coal for I. G. Farben. Even there, Jacobs was remarkably fortunate: though "by then there were many dentists in Fürstengrube who were better trained" (p. 141), he was recommended by an acquaintance from Gutenbrunn, now Lagerältester of Fürstengrube, and appointed camp dentist by the commandant, Otto Moll, who subsequently became a patient himself. Jacobs was able to share the extra food rations that came with the position with his father and brother, and eventually to secure work for them that was easier than the mines. Though their father died in the camp, both brothers survived.

On January 11, 1945, Fürstengrube was liquidated and those inmates who could still walk—Jacobs and his brother among them—were sent on a two-day

death march through the snows to a railway line at Gleiwitz. Those unable to keep pace were shot, but when the dentist began to weaken on the second day, Max Schmidt, the new commandant himself, ensured Jacobs' survival with a shot of vodka. From Gleiwitz, they were transported in open cattle cars to Buchenwald, and from there to Dora-Mittelbau, to work on the V3 rockets under Wernher von Braun and others. But the Red Army's advances made the stay there short; in April, they were taken by barge to the estate of Schmidt's parents. Eventually, Jacobs and his brother were among those marched to the Baltic and loaded onto the *Cap Arcona*, a former luxury liner turned floating concentration camp for almost 15,000 Jews in the bay of Lübeck. On May 3, 1945, British warplanes attacked the ship; only 1,450 of the inmates survived, but Jacobs and his brother were among them. Shortly after they reached shore, the British took control of Lübeck and, for Jacobs, the war was over.

This is the story of Jacobs' survival, and he is clearly the central player throughout. Almost without exception, those in power—from Tadek, the Polish guard at Steineck, to Adolf Eichmann himself, who paused before Jacobs in his review of the inmates at Gutenbrunn to make a sick joke—not only noticed but, in many cases and against all odds, aided Jacobs. Fast-paced, and often suspenseful, Jacobs' account makes use of historical overviews and published reports to support his personal memories; it is rarely introspective, however, because his goal was not to come to terms with himself, but to bear witness to the atrocities committed and to the heroism he and others (including many non-Jews) displayed.

Unlike Kenez and Jacobs, Riva Chirurg and Charlotte Delbo hardly ever supplement their memories with more general information; in this privileging of personal memory, Chirurg and Delbo focus not on the significance of history, but on the recovery of self. Riva Chirurg's first chapter is suitably entitled "Ruminations: Summer, 1939," and much of the first half of the book has a ruminative feel to it. More impressionistic than chronological, Chirurg's account jumps from memory to memory, and only as the pace of events quickens, near the end of the war, does the narrative begin to sweep the reader along. Born Riva Citrin and raised in Lodz with an "uncompromising religious education," Chirurg as a young woman found herself torn between Judaism and Communism. Her solution, in pre-war Poland: "I joined the radical Zionist movement" (p. 2). That commitment, or the beliefs on which it was founded, would later shape her experiences in the Lodz ghetto and the camps. After the German invasion, Chirurg's parents left Lodz for their hometown, taking her younger sisters with them, and leaving the four older girls, including Chirurg, to continue working and take care of their apartment in Lodz. Soon, however, they were evicted by the Germans, and moved into a room in a small hut in the ghetto, where the dire conditions quickly erased the sorts of barriers that Szép maintained throughout his internment: "Class status disappeared and differences eroded between the religious and the secular. Simply stated, local leaders appeared whose main concern was mutual aid" (p. 27). The differences between Szép's labor camp and Chirurg's ghetto, however, may have less to do with the realities of their conditions than with the interests of their authors, one an elite artist, the other a committed Zionist. Certainly for Chirurg, the early days in the ghetto were a continuation of pre-war youth group activities: "We gathered every night at someone else's house. Evenings of readings, study, singing, and

listening to records were organized. . . . The initial objectives were mutual assistance and the joy of being together” (pp. 27–31). The only difference, of course, was that many of these activities were now capital crimes.

Party connections were crucial in the Lodz ghetto: work, food, housing, clothing—everything was apportioned among the various political groups, and then distributed by them. “*Agudat Yisrael, Mizrachi*, the Zionist movement in all varieties, the Bundists and the Communists all reconstituted themselves” (p. 28). Through her Zionist connections, Chirurg was introduced to the “king” of the Lodz ghetto, Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, who assigned her to run a children’s summer camp. As the ghetto became more crowded, the camp was shut, but Chirurg continued to serve in a series of important capacities, notably those connected with the cooking and distribution of food. The sisters’ home at 30 Franczianska Street attracted as residents women in need of support, and as visitors some of the most important young leaders of the ghetto. And the political activities continued even when the enormity of the Germans’ Final Solution was known: “In 1942, we already had evidence which clearly demonstrated the truth of the rumors of extermination; we knew about the gas chambers and mass graves, but we rationalized that what we ‘knew’ was either exaggerated or rhetorical. . . . If not believing that masses were being murdered was a sin, then we sinned. The party leaders sinned, the religious sinned, the optimists sinned. Everybody sinned” (pp. 68–69).

Chirurg remained in the ghetto until its final liquidation—long enough to see the murder or deportation of many of her closest friends. But when a last, desperate attempt to hide in a cellar failed, she and her friends were loaded into a boxcar and transported to Auschwitz, on August 27, 1944, on the same train that carried Rumkowski himself. After three days in Auschwitz, Chirurg and some of her friends were “selected” for transportation again, this time to a labor camp at Gerdauen. There, the camaraderie that had somehow survived the ghetto helped them survive the camp: “We lived by the principle: ‘All for all,’ and we shared everything among ourselves” (p. 152). Nonetheless, many of them died at Gerdauen or at Stutthof, where they were transferred two months later. By the time Stutthof was liquidated, only two of the thirty-three friends who hid in the cellar in Lodz were still together. Along with others, all desperately weak and ill, Chirurg was taken by water from Stutthof to the Baltic, where their boat caught fire and sank. Those rescued, including Chirurg, were brought ashore at Kiel and taken to a nearby camp, where they were neglected until Germany’s surrender, a week later. “On that day, May 8, 1945,” Chirurg remembers, “I had eight bowls of soup” (p. 171). Less than a year later, Chirurg made her way to Palestine; she lives today in Tel-Aviv.

In the impressionism of many of her accounts, especially early in the book, in the cooperative spirit of her efforts, and in the self-deprecating image of herself she provides, Chirurg’s memoir bears strong similarities to that of Charlotte Delbo—similarities that remind the reader not just that these writers are women, but women committed to political goals. Chirurg’s Zionism and Delbo’s Communism allowed them to see beyond their own suffering selves in the camps, and to re-cover those selves with a commitment to life once they were liberated. In commenting on women Holocaust writers, Terrence Des Pres once wrote, “They seemed to care

more for life; and being less dependent on inflated egos, as men were, where those egos were cracked and were swept away, women recovered faster and with less bitterness.”³ At least in the cases of Chirurg and Delbo, caring more for life meant a commitment to community, even in Auschwitz—a commitment given political form before the war, though it is likely that gender helped shape their political idealism as well as their altruistic behavior in the camps.

Charlotte Delbo’s account of Auschwitz, which comprises the first volume and a half of her trilogy, is almost entirely devoid of chronology. The first chapter of the first volume, *None of Us Will Return*, is entitled “Arrivals, Departures,” and contrasts the scenes of greetings and good-byes at a normal train station with what happened at Auschwitz, “a station where those who arrive are those who are leaving . . . where those who arrive have never arrived, where those who have left never came back” (p. 3). But this is not Delbo’s own arrival; rather, it is a collective arrival, a compilation of all arrivals, and thus happening continuously. That self-effacing beginning sets the tone for this most unusual, and beautiful, Holocaust memoir. Between her own arrival and departure, Delbo lived in the timeless, senseless, ordered chaos of the death camp, and she attempted to convey that reality not as a narrative but as a series of impressions, given anecdotal or lyrical form. The progression of her memoir is thus based on images rather than time: the life cycle, from arrival to crematorium; the daily routine, from pre-dawn roll call to nightly tormented sleep; and recollections of exceptional suffering or momentary hope. Certain deprivations prove overwhelming. We have no way of knowing, for example, whether it is the same debilitating episode of thirst Delbo recounted in chapters entitled “Thirst,” midway through both the first and second volume, though this seems likely; but the repetitious content and central placement of these chapters emphasizes the unforgettable quality of the experience being described, and suggests an underlying structure to the seemingly random order of Delbo’s memories.

Related to those “Thirst” chapters, and serving as another example of overwhelming deprivation, is “The Stream” chapter in *Useless Knowledge*. It is the next chapter after “Thirst” in the second volume, and like the first “Thirst,” it has a stream or brook as its central image. That image is itself important—a natural oasis among the manufactured horrors of Auschwitz. In “The Stream,” Delbo uses the running water not to slake her thirst but to wash her body. Yet the overpowering importance of that simple act has affected her memory: she recalls herself alone at the stream, an impossibility in security-conscious Auschwitz, and the recollected sensations are so intense that she can only guess at her own thoughts and actions. She tells us what probably happened (“I must have been careful to stay in the same column as my group, and later, after a long wait, the column must have marched through the gate where the SS in the sentry box counted the ranks passing though” [p. 147]), and what might have happened (“Perhaps we sat down, because the weather was fine” [p. 148]). But she is also aware that some of what she does recall could not have happened, that the recollection has been shaped by memory, not reality: “In my memory—try as I do with all my might—there is only the stream and me. This is wrong, absolutely wrong. No one was there alone, except in solitary, and I knew no one who was imprisoned in this way. No one from our group, I mean. . . . After the soup—if my memory is true—the kapo shouted, ‘Now, if you wish, you may wash

yourselves in the stream.' Of this I'm certain. and yet I do not see the woman with whom I walked in the direction of the stream. And I couldn't have gone there on my own. Who was I with? I really don't know. We were always two by two, a pair that never parted. We must have gone there, all five of us, talking. We always talked. I don't see the others, not even Viva, who always helped me walk. I recall going down to the stream alone" (pp. 148–149).

The point, of course, is that Delbo's memory carries an emotional truth, if not a literal one: that the simple experience of washing herself, for the first time since arriving at Auschwitz seventy-seven days earlier, was so intense and so absorbing that all else has been excluded from her recollection. She does not remember the work done that day, the food eaten, or even the presence of her closest friends, on whom she depended. Indeed, she cannot even remember her own thoughts at the time, though she guesses they were of a shower she took before Auschwitz: "So, on that day, at the stream, I must have thought of the last shower, and also of the pleasure of immersing one's body in gentle, warm water. Or perhaps I thought of all the ones who had died since our arrival without having been able to splash some water on their faces. All of this is but reported remembrances. Actually, I thought of nothing except the stream, and all my thoughts were focused on what I had to do to wash myself, to remove the dirt as fast and thoroughly as possible" (p. 152). Having filled the chapter with possible memories she does not have, Delbo concludes with the single truth: "It must have happened like this, but I have no memory of it. I only recall the stream" (p. 153).

There are other examples in Delbo's writing of this memoirist's critique of memory. In discussing a particularly brutal gauntlet the inmates were made to run one day on returning to camp, she wonders about her comprehension of the scene at the time, as well as her comprehension when describing it. "I do not know if I understood that we had to run because on each side of the gate, and all along the Lagerstrasse, a double row of the camp's female personnel, SS women, female prisoners, wearing armbands and blouses of every color and every rank, stood there, armed with walking sticks, clubs, straps, belts, lashes, whips, ready to flail and scourge whatever passed between the two rows" (p. 36). And later, when considering the scene in *None of Us Will Return*, she writes, "I have no idea whether I reconstituted this whole scene after the fact or if I had an overall concept from the start" (p. 36).

Peter Kenez describes a similar problem in reconstructing his attitudes and emotions as a child in Budapest in 1944. "How much did I know about what was really happening? I am trying now to put out of my mind everything that I learned later, but it is impossible" (p. 26). At the end of *Varieties of Fear*, Kenez writes, "What I remember are memories of memories: moments, situations, and events that I have recalled often" (p. 213). There is a distance both temporal and psychological separating the memoirist from the event, and that distance is called memory. This is as true for the diarist, transcribing incidents and feelings which transpired only moments or hours before, as it is for the autobiographer delineating personalities and events half a century later; as true for the Holocaust writer as for others. But for those that have suffered the extremes of inhumanity and deprivation, as in the ghettos and death camps of the Final Solution, recovering memories entails a re-covering of exposed and vulnerable selves with which there may be no coming to terms.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Langer, "Fictional Facts and Factual Fictions: History in Holocaust Literature," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs; New York: The Csengeri Institute for Holocaust Studies of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, 1990), p. 117.
2. Joseph Sungolowsky, "Holocaust and Autobiography: Wiesel, Friedländer, Pissar," in Randolph L. Braham (ed.), *Reflections of the Holocaust in Art and Literature* (Boulder: Social Science Monographs; New York: The Csengeri Institute for Holocaust Studies of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, 1990), p. 133.
3. As quoted in Joan Miriam Ringelheim, "The Unethical and the Unspeakable: Women and the Holocaust," *Simon Wiesenthal Center Annual* 1 (1984): 72.

Teaching Judaism in the Secular University

WILLIAM NICHOLLS

The Teaching of Jewish Civilization: A Global Approach to Higher Education. Edited by MOSHE DAVIS. New York/London: New York University Press, 1995.

Judaism in Modern Times: An Introduction and Reader. By JACOB NEUSNER. Cambridge, MA/Oxford, UK: Blackwells, 1995.

SINCE ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE PRESENT CENTURY, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS HAVE BEEN taught about Jewish life and thought in a way that has no precedent in tradition. The rapid growth of departments of religious studies and, later, independent departments of Jewish studies in state as well as private universities has opened a new educational field. Non-Jewish as well as Jewish students are being introduced to Judaism in a pluralistic, multicultural, intellectual environment that requires new approaches, for which the yeshiva type of training is not the right model. This new way of studying Judaism as *a* religion, even as one religion among others, leads people to ask new questions and will surely result in the gaining of fresh insights. Where are the resources coming from? What text books can be used, what scholarly community exists to support and nourish the teachers?

While it is true that tradition affords no precedent for this way of learning about Judaism, more recent history has much to offer. The *Wissenschaft des Judentums* and the positive historical school of the nineteenth century had begun to raise these new modern questions, and had already generated useful material. Conservative and Reform scholars, already themselves trained in a historical approach to Judaism, were able to fit easily into the historicism of much of the environment of the modern university. More recently, phenomenological and literary critical approaches have been added. Even a post-modern approach to Judaism is developing among Orthodox as well as less traditionally minded scholars.

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These administrators who wondered how to meet the new demand for the study of Judaism within the structure of the liberal university were initially somewhat at sea. Now there is no reason for them to be confused any longer, with the publication of Moshe Davis' extensive symposium on the teaching of Judaism in the modern university. I know how grateful I would have been myself two decades ago as Head of a department of religious studies, planning an appointment in Jewish studies, to have had the chance to study this comprehensive survey of what is being done all over the world in every conceivable area of Jewish studies. Given so much information in a convenient format, an administrator can easily see where his own institution might find a niche for itself. And the scholar will find a handy guide to what his colleagues are doing elsewhere, as a foundation for further investigation.

This is not to say that the academic and intellectual problems have been solved. The new questions that are raised by this still novel way of studying Judaism will be with us as a fruitful stimulus to inquiry for a long time to come. We probably still do not have a suitable first year text book, just as there is no really satisfactory text book yet for the first year course in religious studies, though Huston Smith's *Religions of the World* comes close. But there are materials of real usefulness being written.

Among them is Jacob Neusner's study of modern Judaism, a significant contribution. Neusner was himself a pioneer in this field. Even in his days at Brown, he was training all his graduate students, including the specialists in Talmud, to work in religious studies departments. From the first he was sensitive to the questions this new environment would raise.

Neusner's new book is a pleasure to read. The reader can enjoy observing a penetrating analytical mind at work on the phenomena of modern Judaism, developing a way of looking at its historical and social problems that will make sense to the beginning student, even if he or she is not Jewish, and still have validity for the seasoned historian of religion and culture.

Neusner speaks of Judaism and especially of Judaisms—varieties of Judaism that form consistent structures based on principles that appear self-evident to their originators and adherents. The new Judaisms that have appeared in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are related in various ways to what Neusner likes to refer to as the Judaism of the dual Torah—what others have called, perhaps less illuminatingly, normative Judaism. That relationship was a close one for all the new Judaisms that appeared in the nineteenth century in response to the challenge of secularism, Reform, Orthodoxy, and Conservatism. Neusner brings out the traditional character (as well as the outstanding success) even of Reform, which especially today may appear to many to have branched out into remarkable novelty. He also surprises us with the reminder that of the three, it is Orthodoxy that presents the greatest variety of forms within shared assumptions.

The relationship with tradition is much less close for those Judaisms that have appeared in the twentieth century, the post-Christian century as Neusner, rightly, I believe, sees it. These are Zionism, Jewish Socialism, and Yiddishism, and the American Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption. All of these are responses to a world in which Christian influence on society had diminished to vanishing point, and Jews faced mortal danger from movements unrestrained by Christian ethics. Thus, they are not "theological" responses and do not necessarily involve belief in the tradition transmitted by the Judaism of the dual Torah. They respond rather to

an existential threat. All three can be strongly secular, though Zionism and the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption, in particular, frequently blend with the Judaisms that developed in the nineteenth century (a point, I think, insufficiently emphasized in Neusner's trenchant analysis.)

Neusner proceeds by introducing first his theme and the method by which he proposes to approach it, and then presents each of the six Judaisms he will consider by way of an introduction showing how each responded to the challenge it saw itself as facing, what it regarded as self-evident (or took for granted) and how the system structured itself in response. These brief and closely reasoned introductions are followed in each case by a reading that sometimes expands on and exemplifies Neusner's own account, and sometimes supplements it with a different point of view. The readings are well chosen, effectively complementing and filling out Neusner's own analysis.

It is a compliment to Neusner to say that his analysis stimulates the reader's own thoughts on the topic, and therefore possible disagreement. There can surely be no argument with his identification of these six movements as the principal Jewish responses to the challenges of their respective centuries. I was puzzled however by his apparently unquestioning identification of the Judaism of the dual Torah with European Ashkenazic Judaism. Sephardic Judaism, which has a long history of flourishing in pluralistic environments not unlike our own, appears in only one intriguing footnote. Consequently, certain features of Ashkenazic Judaism, even of clothing, are treated as if they were simply characteristics of the Judaism of the dual Torah, of which Sephardic Judaism is surely no less authentic an embodiment. Some Sephardic scholars, such as Marc Angel, José Faur, and Marc-Alain Ouaknin, are showing us that the Judaism of the dual Torah is itself capable of responding to the challenges of the modern era, without the innovations that even Orthodoxy introduced, some of which made the tradition more rigid than before.

I have already mentioned the danger of being over-analytical. Clearly, the new Judaisms of the twentieth century, precisely because they are not theological or philosophical responses to their time, are less mutually exclusive, and less cut off from nineteenth century Judaisms, than older and more traditional developments. Zionist Orthodoxy, for example, is clearly a major force, contributing substantially to American *aliya* to Israel. The fusion of Orthodoxy with the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption is clearly to be seen in the work of such a writer as Irving Greenberg, and in the many he has influenced.

These are not objections to Neusner's analysis, indeed one imagines they might be the kind of responses he hopes for from students. His book will surely be of great help to numerous students and teachers in the years to come. We need more materials like this.

From All Their Habitations

Divorce, Tel Aviv Style - 1973

V I C T O R B . G E L L E R

IT WAS A CLASSIC ILLUSTRATION OF THE FIRST MISHNA in the Gemara Gittin, the opening law of the Talmudic tractate dealing with divorce:

One who brings a document of divorce from abroad must say it was written in my presence and it was signed in my presence.

At the time, I was a tour operator specializing in trips to Israel. A rabbi friend, who knew that I was leaving shortly for Tel Aviv, called me and sought my assistance. The rabbi had been asked to help someone in his community with a personal matter.

Bruce and Lorraine Wine (all the names in this piece are fictitious) had been married by a Reform rabbi in New York. After several years, their marriage foundered and ended in an amicable civil divorce. Since neither of them was observant, a Get, a religious divorce, was never discussed or sought by either party. Looking to make a fresh start, the ex-wife went to Israel.

In time, Lorraine became acclimated to her new life. She met a man, their mutual attraction grew, and culminated in a decision to marry. Lorraine began to learn about *Gittin*, Jewish divorce, for in Israel marriage and divorce are under the jurisdiction of the rabbinic courts. Her civil divorce in the United States was not recognized in Israel. To her surprise and chagrin, Lorraine was deemed to be still married to Bruce.

Fortunately, the friendly relationship between Lorraine and Bruce allowed for a quick resolution of her problem. Bruce unhesitatingly agreed to give his wife a *Get*. My rabbi friend wanted me to take the Get from the husband with me and to give it to the wife in Israel. I accepted the assignment.

The rabbinic court room, was located in a midtown Manhattan office building. When I arrived I found a T-shaped conference table in the center of a large room. There were three rabbis, who constituted the *Bet Din*, religious court,

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FROM ALL THEIR HABITATIONS takes its title from Ezekiel 37:23 and features reports of Jewish religious, intellectual, and communal life in various parts of the world.

seated in high-backed chairs at the head of the T. On one side of the long rectangular table sat the Sofer, the scribe, who was to prepare the document, and two witnesses. I took the vacant seat opposite them, next to my rabbi friend and the husband.

Once the introductions were made and the roles of the various people were explained, the actual hearing took only fifteen minutes. Following the Talmudic code, the senior presiding rabbi formally ascertained that Bruce was the person seeking to divorce his wife, Lorraine, and that he was doing so of his own free will, without any coercion, and without any mental reservations. The preparation of the actual *Get* took almost an hour. The scribe, writing on a parchment scroll with a quill, meticulously printed twelve lines of Aramaic as called for by Jewish law. He included the Hebrew names of both the husband and the wife in the prescribed places. As required by Halacha, the husband formally instructed the scribe to write “for him, for her, for the purposes of divorce.” The twelve lines corresponded to the *Gematria*, the numerical value, of the two Hebrew letters for *Get*.* When he finished, the senior judge called on Bruce once again to reaffirm his intention. When he did, the two witnesses testified that they had heard the testimony of the husband and the public reading of the completed *Get*. They were then asked to sign it.

The rabbi rolled up the signed document and presented it to Bruce and said, “On the authority of this Bet Din I give this document to you. It is now your property. Its sole legal power is to divorce your wife and to free her to marry anyone she wishes within the framework of Jewish law. For the divorce to take effect you or your agent must submit this document to your wife or her agent.”

Here the rabbi paused and gestured for me to stand next to him, “You may, if you wish, designate this man as your *shaliach l’mesirah*, your transfer agent. In doing so you would be instructing and authorizing him to act on your behalf. To appoint him as your agent, you should hand the *Get* to him and recite after me. . . .”

Bruce repeated the words of the presiding rabbi as he put the scroll in my open hands. The business of the Bet Din was over. It was now up to me to complete its work.

Shortly after my arrival in Israel I went to the Rabbinical Court Building on King David Street in Tel Aviv. Thanks to years of yeshiva education and frequent stays in Israel, I spoke a competent Hebrew so I had no difficulty finding the registry office where I presented the *Get* that I had brought for Lorraine Wine to the clerk. Treating my appearance as a routine matter, he told me to take a seat. After checking a log on an adjacent desk, he went into a back room. When he returned, the clerk had the case file.

* On the . . . day of the week, the . . . day of the month of . . . in the year . . . from the creation of the world according to the calendar reckoning we are accustomed to count here, in the city of . . . , located on the . . . river, and also situated near wells of water, I . . . the son of . . . , who am present in the city, which is located on the . . . river, and situated near wells of water, do willingly consent, being under no restraint, to release, to set free, and put aside thee, my wife . . . , daughter of . . . who art located today in the city of . . . , which is located on the . . . river, and situated near wells of water, who has been my wife from before. Thus I do set free, release thee, and put thee aside, in order that thou may have permission and the authority over thyself to go and marry any man thou may desire. No person may hinder thee from this day onward, and thou art permitted to every man. This shall be for thee from me a bill of dismissal, a letter of release, and a document of freedom, in accordance with the laws of Moses and Israel.

. . . the son of . . . , witness.

. . . the son of . . . , witness.

I watched curiously as he studied the file. I wondered what I would do if he found something wrong. It wouldn't affect me but it would be a terrible blow to the woman who was probably waiting anxiously for this legal proceeding to be over. My daydreaming was interrupted by a question.

"May I see your passport?"

A bit surprised, I gave it to him. He looked very carefully at my name and address and scrutinized my photo. He took pains to satisfy himself that I was the person I claimed to be and who was obviously listed in the file as the agent of the husband.

Satisfied that all was in order, the clerk stamped the back of the *Get* and placed it in the file. He told me to go up to courtroom #4 and take a seat. I was to listen for docket 4-373. When they called it, I was to stand up and be ready to go before the judges.

Courtroom #4 was a small, square space with a low ceiling. There were two sections divided by a center aisle, each seating about thirty people. The usual waist high, wooden railing separated spectators from the open area before the bench. The court clerk's desk stood at the end of the open area perpendicular to the bench. The tables and chairs for the respondents were just beyond the railing.

The bench dominated the room. Two and a half feet above floor level, the black dais extended the width of the room. At each end there were doors that led out of the courtroom. Just as I took my seat in the middle row on the right side, the three judges entered the courtroom.

They were all dressed in rabbinic black. Two had traditional full-length coats while one had a shorter, regular jacket. The white of their shirts was largely obscured by their beards. The beards added more than just color to their appearances but also helped to define personality and seniority.

The rabbi seated in the middle was obviously the senior judge. He had a long, white beard which he brought to a straggly point by slow, repeated combing with the fingers of his left hand. On his left was a shorter, gray beard, neatly squared and trimmed. Under it, a small section of a patterned tie was visible before it disappeared beneath his black coat. On the right a bush of light brown curls growing in all directions identified the junior member of the bench.

There was no ceremony or formality as the judges took their seats. A few spectators rose briefly to their feet, but it was more as a sign of respect for the rabbinate than reverence for the judiciary. The judges paid no attention to the people in the courtroom as they reviewed the papers before them and made side comments to each other. When he was satisfied that all the documents were in order, the senior judge exchanged glances of confirmation with his colleagues and nodded to the court clerk to call the first case.

Two attorneys appeared in the first matter. The husband and wife were not present. Both sides submitted documents confirming an agreement reached by their clients regarding alimony and maintenance. This was to clear the way for the court to schedule a final divorce hearing and judgment. The courtroom proceedings, including the comments among the judges, were all in Hebrew, which I translated in my mind as I followed the procedures.

The morning continued with a series of cases. A *Get* was issued. A complaint was filed by an attorney on behalf of a former wife because of the husband's failure to provide child support. A request for postponement of a hearing on a support

claim was filed on behalf of a husband who was in the hospital following a heart attack. Then came the Abitoul Case.

When the clerk called their docket, both the husband and the wife stood up. They were told to come forward and to take seats at each of the respondent tables. Neither had an attorney or anyone else accompanying them.

The senior judge continued to review the docket, as he pensively combed his beard with his fingers. After a comment to his brown bearded young associate, he addressed the couple. Looking at the wife he asked, "Madam, what is your name?"

The woman rose and said "My name is Malka Abitoul, Your Honor."

"What is your husband's name?"

"His name is Rahamim Abitoul, Your Honor."

"Is he in the courtroom?"

"Yes, Your Honor." Her delicate chin tense with determination, she pointed across the room to the opposing table where her husband sat impassively.

"Thank you. Please be seated."

The judge turned to the husband and asked, "Sir, what is your name?"

"Rahamim Abitoul."

Before the judge could ask his next question the clerk strode over to the table and uttered an angry whisper. Abitoul slouched to his feet with an awkwardness that said that he was not used either to giving respect or receiving it.

"What is your wife's name?"

"Her name is Malka Abitoul, er, Your Honor."

"Is she in the courtroom?"

"Yes." He raised his arm halfheartedly and formed a diagonal pointing to the floor near the opposing table.

"Thank you. Be seated."

The judge turned back to the wife. "Mrs. Abitoul, do you still wish to be divorced from your husband?"

"Yes, absolutely, Your Honor."

Shifting once again to the husband he asked, "Mr. Abitoul, do you still wish to divorce your wife?"

"No, Your Honor, I do not."

The judge stopped. The next words remained unspoken as he looked searchingly at the husband. The judge's raised eyebrows were fixed in a puzzled question on his face.

"I see," said the judge in an undertone. Then in a louder, not unfriendly voice he asked, "In that case how do you explain your notarized statement before us petitioning the court to grant you a divorce?"

"I changed my mind."

"I understand," said the judge as he leaned back in his seat and stretched his arms toward his two associates beckoning them to lean closer to him. White, gray and brown, the three beards bobbed and turned in a talmudic semaphore code, blending hairs instead of splitting them, as they intently discussed this unexpected turn of events.

Rabbinic courts grant divorces only if there is consent by both parties. The docket of Abitoul vs. Abitoul reached the court on this basis. The husband's apparent change of heart stopped the proceedings in their tracks. The judges were

stymied. Their huddle was necessary to determine what they could and should do. It took them several minutes to find the answer.

The judge changed the formal tone of voice that he had been using and addressed the wife with warmth and encouragement. He said, "In life there are occasions when we are given a chance to step back from a mistake. It is only human for us sometimes to feel that we are caught up in situations that we cannot repair. Yet upon reflection, after the opportunity has passed, after we have allowed ourselves to be carried along by the tide of circumstances, we often say to ourselves, 'I could have acted.' Your husband's reconsideration may be just such a moment, not only for him but for you as well.

"A marriage, with all of its difficulties, is a precious structure. It is worth much effort by the owners to repair, to strengthen. Yes, sometimes cracks appear in the walls, new tiles have to be laid on the floor or a broken window pane needs replacing. We should try to fix, patch, and improve. To destroy a house is an act of despair. To tear down a Jewish house is a tragedy.

"Why don't you consider giving your Jewish house another chance? If you and your husband put your hearts and minds to it, there is a possibility that you can save your home and your life together."

The senior rabbi ended his remarks and leaned back. He nodded his head at the wife inviting her to respond.

"Your Honor, this marriage will not continue." Malka Abitoul announced. After a short pause, she took a deep breath, exhaled, and continued. "Whatever happens here I will not stay with him. He is a thief, a liar, a gambler. He goes with other women.

"When we got married three years ago I brought 20,000 Lira with me. He brought nothing. We were both working so we put my money in a savings account for an apartment that we were going to buy. I trusted him so we made the account for either signature.

"After a while he began to go out for an evening and play cards. At first it was once a month. Later it became once a week and then two or three times a week. When I complained he said that he worked hard at the garage and he needed some fun. He never told me that he was playing for money. I didn't know that it was my money that he was gambling with.

"For the past year I was paying for everything. He always had excuses why he didn't have any money left from his salary. Then came stories that he had to be out of the city on repair jobs and would sleep over. People in the neighborhood noticed him in other places and saw him with other women. Finally, the news reached my family and me.

"At first I thought that it was somehow my fault. In my family, my four brothers and sisters are all married and they never had such shame. I was embarrassed to face them. They kept talking to me and helped me see what was happening, that I had married a cheat who was stealing my money so that he could gamble and pay for the dirty life he has. I will not be a part of such a life. I want a divorce."

Malka was out of breath. She sat down primly, somewhat surprised with herself, that she had the courage to make public the hurt that she had hidden in her heart. The courtroom was silent. The speech by the slim, neatly dressed young woman echoed with determination. It insisted that she would not allow herself to

be put at the disposal of others. Like it or not, the ring in her voice proclaimed her a force to be reckoned with.

The senior judge acknowledged the wife's presentation. He looked at the husband, slouched in his chair. His legs splayed at an angle from the table, the husband's left arm hung on the back of his chair as he studied the fingers of his right hand. In the absence of any sound, the tension increased, but he refused eye contact with the judge.

The judge ended the game and said. "Mr. Abitoul, your wife has made a powerful statement. What have you to say in reply?"

Without rising or even looking up, he answered. "She makes big things out of little things and repeats a lot of old women's gossip."

The clerk was visibly upset at the man's chutzpa, but the judge ignored it and asked. "Perhaps now you will agree that you should give your wife a divorce?"

"No."

Shrugging his shoulders in disappointment, the judge leaned back and looked at both his associates. They tilted their heads towards his in a huddled exchange. Presently they resumed their positions and the senior rabbi looked at the spectators' section of the courtroom.

To make sure that he would be heard, he raised his voice and asked. "Is there anyone else present who wishes to be heard on the matter before the court?"

"Yes," replied a man in the row ahead of me, as he stood up.

"Who are you?" asked the judge.

"I am Avraham Mizrahi and I am Malka Abitoul's brother."

"Please step forward Mr. Mizrahi."

The brother was powerfully built, six feet tall, in his mid-30s. He moved in light strides to the middle of the open area directly below the presiding judge. He didn't look at the parties seated at the tables on either side of him.

"What can you tell us?" asked the judge.

"Your Honor, this marriage was a mistake from the very beginning. It never should have happened. Our families, the Mizrahis and the Abitouls know each other from the Magreb. Our fathers were old friends. The Abitouls are a respectable family. While we didn't grow up in the same communities here in Israel, they always had a good reputation. They still do except for my brother-in-law. He is a bad apple from a good tree.

"Malka was always a happy girl. She was the youngest and everybody's favorite, but she was never spoiled. She was the family sunshine. When Rahamim came along, we were all very happy. He came from an honorable family. He had a job, and he said that he would take good care of Malka.

"Soon after the wedding Malka's smile disappeared. At first we thought she just needed time to get used to married life. But weeks and months passed and things got worse. It was as if Malka was sick with some unknown disease and it was taking her life away.

"We decided to try to find out what was wrong, but Malka put us off. She kept denying that anything was wrong. Then, when it was plain to the whole family, she said that she had some problems but she was trying to handle them by herself.

"After a while her problems were not a secret. The neighbors knew it, the community knew it and, finally, we found out from them. This bum has other women. He is a liar. He promises everything and keeps only what he wants to keep.

He's a gambler, a heavy gambler. If he wins, he spends it on his women. If he loses, my sister ends up paying for it. He can't be trusted to keep his word. He shouldn't be trusted with keeping a wonderful girl locked in a terrible marriage."

The judge nodded to the brother and said. "Thank you, Mr. Mizrahi, for your statement. Please take a seat next to Mrs. Abitoul at her table."

Turning to the husband sprawled inertly in his chair, the judge asked. "Do you have anything to say in reply to the statement that we have just heard?"

"No" was the bored reply.

The judge reacted immediately. He addressed his two associates with an audible, "Gentlemen," inviting them to huddle with him. The two associates listened intently as the senior rabbi spoke with emphasis. There were brief comments and questions as he pursued his views. They talked for about five minutes and concluded with a vigorous assent.

The judge addressed the brother who rose to face the bench, "Mr. Mizrahi, it is the feeling of the court that you may hold the key to the resolution of the matter that is before us. We ask, therefore, that you follow the officer of the court to an adjoining office where we would like you to meet with Mr. Abitoul. Hopefully, in a serious discussion with him, you will succeed in persuading him to rethink his decision in the light of this morning's proceedings. After your discussion the officer will bring you back to the court so that we might resolve the issue now pending."

The husband stirred as if troubled. He stared at the judge in confusion and allowed himself a quick glance at the tall, erect figure at the opposite table. A vague sense of disadvantage grew in his stomach as he pushed himself to his feet.

"What is this all about?" he asked, "I don't want to go to any room with him."

He scanned the courtroom as if seeking some moral support for his position. The half filled spectators' section only returned blank stares of alienation. The vague feeling in his stomach was now a sharp pain. The husband was not just alone, he was the common enemy of all. They were all against him, his wife, her family, the judges, even the spectators.

"I don't want to go!" he pleaded as the officer gripped his upper arm and led him to an unpleasant confrontation.

When Abitoul left the courtroom there was a huge release of tension, as if the air was let out of a balloon that was about to burst. The moment of drama was over, at least temporarily, and the humdrum beat of bureaucracy was restored. The clerk and the judge conferred over the resumption of the calendar and prepared to return to business.

"Docket 4-373," called the clerk. My case was next. I rose to be recognized and to fulfill my role.

After all I had witnessed earlier, my testimony was a letdown. The judge paid very little attention to me. His interest was limited to ascertaining that I was who I claimed to be and that I was able to verify that I had witnessed the writing and the signing of the *Get*. As soon as I had done so the judge said that the *Bet Din* had been designated by Lorraine Wine to act as her *shlichim l'kabala*, her agents of acceptance. With my testimony the *Bet Din* accepted the *Get* that I had brought. The divorce was now complete and in force.

That was all. I never saw Lorraine Wine or spoke to her. I did my job but it left me no feeling of satisfaction. As I neared the exit from the courtroom, I remembered the case before mine and stopped. The Wine divorce was routine and quick. The

Abitoul divorce was a quarrelsome, unresolved affair. What would be the outcome? I decided to stay in the courtroom and find out the result.

Two more cases were called before the clerk of the court approached the bench and spoke to the judge. The side door opened and the brother came into the courtroom followed by the officer and the husband.

The brother walked straight to his sister's table. He looked at the bench but the look on his face said nothing. It was only when he sat down and took his sister's hand that he showed any feeling. From his manner it was not clear what had transpired in the court-ordered session. When the husband walked in it was clear.

His dark complexion was all but washed from his face. His eyes blinked frantically as if trying to acclimate to a sudden bright light. His shoulders twitched as he nervously tugged at his polo shirt. Slumping into his seat, it was clear that Rahamim Abitoul was very distressed.

The judge wasted no time. He asked, "Mr. Abitoul, having had an opportunity to discuss matters with Mr. Mizrahi, do you have anything to tell the court."

"Yes."

"What is that?"

"I agree."

"Are we to understand that you now agree to giving your wife a divorce?"

"Yes."

"So that there is no misunderstanding, would you please say so in your own words."

"I agree to give my wife a divorce."

"Is your consent on the same settlement terms as stated in the earlier affidavit?"

"Yes."

"Please say so for the court."

"I agree on the same terms as agreed before."

"Thank you, Mr. Rahamim. In order to complete this matter without any further delay, the court will instruct the clerk immediately to convene the *sofer*, the scribe, and the witnesses for this purpose. Upon completion the parties will return to the court for execution of the *Get*."

I left the courtroom and the building. As I walked along the bright, sun-warmed streets of Tel Aviv, my perspective was restored. Not everyone was caught up in stress-laden and life-affecting crises. Most people spend their allotted days in the ordinary pursuit of small chores. I found an outdoor cafe and sat down for some coffee and reflection.

The irony was striking. The Wines and the Abitouls had no idea of each other's existence. They were, nevertheless, linked by a faith little observed, a language not shared, and a peoplehood they could not explain. Fate, coincidence, or a Jewish destiny brought them together in a courtroom dedicated to an ancient system of law.

That ancient law now enjoyed the resurgence of renewed authority. It also suffered the hostility of the same secular world that enforced its rule. That morning I saw three judges try, as best they knew how, to fulfill the law. They sought out the firm hand of family to help support the law—and also to achieve a small victory for justice.

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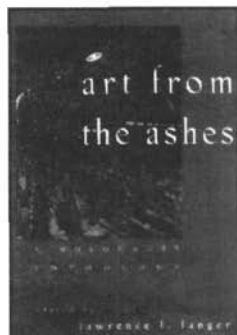
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The Jewish calling of the Institute imbued the 1925 opening with historical-religious associations of revival and redemption that surpassed the 1918 and 1923 celebrations. The "temple of science," that Ussishkin proclaimed at Einstein's inaugural lecture, became in Magnes' address "a holy place, a sanctuary in which to learn and teach all that Judaism has made and created from the time of the Bible until our days." The Institute, Magnes, affirmed, would do nothing less than address the question, "What is Judaism?" Through "research and the scientific method" and by "making use of the complete apparatus that the scientific method places at our disposal," all who wished would "elucidate" Judaism. Lest there be any doubts, Magnes emphasized the Institute's secular commitment to the free pursuit of knowledge. What the Institute of Jewish Studies possessed that made it truly different from and superior to all other centers of Jewish scholarship, Magnes stressed, was its "genius loci," its physical location in Eretz Israel and more specifically in Jerusalem.

He concluded with the grand vision of an Institute of Jewish Studies that would eventually encompass all of the humanities. In their natural habitat, it would no longer be necessary or desirable to compartmentalize Jewish studies; the particular and the universal would be studied as a harmonious whole.

Arthur A. Goren

*The View from Scopus: Judah L. Magnes
and the Early Years of the Hebrew University*

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